

# Carron Valley & District

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Carron Valley & District Newsletter

Issue 36 / Nov'23

## This and That

IN THE PAST YEAR 35% of Scottish households were in fuel poverty, this having risen from 25% pre-Oct'22. A fuel-poor household is one where -

- ◇ more than 10% (20% for extreme fuel poverty) of net income is required to pay for reasonable fuel needs after housing costs have been deducted and,
- ◇ the remaining household income is not enough to maintain an acceptable standard of living, defined as at least 90% of the UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS) once child-care costs and disability or care benefits are deducted.

Legislation provides for uplifts to be applied to the MIS for households in rural and island communities to take into account the higher cost of living in these areas.

While it's not clear how this will be done, the VRG recognises that there are a lot of households in our community in fuel-poverty and we will always do our best to mitigate that. Currently the free wood-fuel scheme, while not aiming to provide all residential fuel needs, together with several of the grant schemes, aims to help keep fuel costs down. In addition the major Energy Efficiency project we have embarked on aims to substantially reduce the cost of heating and powering homes, thus leaving householders with more money in their pockets year on year. With your help, this should also reduce our carbon footprint which is a national and worldwide ambition we all know about.

Apart from giving out wads of cash which we can't do, if you have any ideas how we can achieve the above please contact: [chair@valleyrenewables.co.uk](mailto:chair@valleyrenewables.co.uk).

## Events in the Community

SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER, we have had three Community events, all held at the event space in the Community Woodland. Together with the Gardeners' Question Time earlier, the excellent general attendance shows we are quite a sociable bunch.

**THE RESIDENTS' PICNIC:** Held towards the end of August, it was a big success despite some idiot campers trying to burn a hole in the beautifully prepared grass just a few days before. However, it was quickly repaired, and recovered in time for the event.

Several new exhibitors were in attendance and we were entertained by Kippen youngsters and others. In addition we were all fed royally by Jennifer Willgerod. A very pleasant afternoon was had overall.

Other event reports elsewhere.



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## Woodland Update

THE COMMUNITY WOODLAND has had a busy year with the event space also being well used; reports elsewhere.

### WOOD-FUEL DAYS:

The recent wood-fuel day was our last for the year. A big **THANK YOU** to all who have given of their time to ensure eight successful days of processing logs or delivering wood all around the Community, plus for the surprise 'volunteer re-fuelling' with arrivals of soup, pies, sandwiches, cake and nibbles on some of the colder days. These three bits of delicious parkin were all that were left out of a whole tray before we had a chance to take a photo! Brilliant! Recipe to come.



Residents' surplus tomatoes, courgettes and eggs have been swapped and all found homes, and new residents have had a chance to meet some more neighbours. Some folk took up the chance to spend an hour or so tending to the planted trees - our future wood-fuel. So that's a good reason to nurture them whilst they are growing.

From a drookit February through to a cool November there has been lots of chat and laughter whilst helping each other. A full woodstore can only help ensure warmer homes over the months to come.

For the statisticians, 72 households have taken part, and 278 loads of wood-fuel collected or distributed.

**RE: NEXT WOODLAND DATE 9<sup>TH</sup> DEC:** Tree planting / tidying, cut your own Christmas tree, Big Bioblitz.

It would be wonderful to see as many as possible come along to help finish off the tree planting which was postponed to prioritise the wood-fuel days. Your reward: choose and cut your own Christmas tree. An additional interest may be to take part in the inaugural quarterly Big Nature Count at the woodland - easy to take part and ideal for youngsters or not-so-youngsters. We can't guarantee Santa will turn up but the odd Christmas pie may make an appearance. DB

## Burning Wood? Use a Moisture Meter

IF YOU BURN WOOD on your open fire or in a wood-burner, ensure that it is well seasoned first. When wet wood is burned, it does so very inefficiently, smouldering and releasing lots of harmful particles. However, the same piece of wood dried to less than 20% moisture content becomes an incredibly efficient, carbon-neutral, eco-friendly heat source.

So, how do you know the wood you're using is dry enough? If it comes from a kiln dried source and you keep it indoors, it should be fine. If you dry your own (known as seasoning), you may wish to test it with a moisture meter. There is a reasonable selection on the market for £15-£25 and, if you think that's too much to pay for your own individual use, a wee cluster of households could share one.

As far as seasoning is concerned, that's best done under cover but somewhere with a good air flow. This could be outside in a sunny spot but put a tarpaulin over the top, or in an open shed, barn or log store. Remember to stack your logs with the grain of the wood horizontal; cut ends soak up moisture in quick time, and the smaller you cut them the quicker they dry.



## Woodland Dates

All dependent on sufficient volunteering.

### 2023

- 9<sup>th</sup> Dec:** 10am –1pm: Tree planting, woodland maintenance plus cut your own Christmas Tree.  
11am-12noon: Big Bioblitz (see below)

### 2024

- 10<sup>th</sup> Feb:** Tree maintenance and Sitka removal.  
**9<sup>th</sup> Mar:** Wood-fuel and woodland tasks.  
**13<sup>th</sup> Apr:** Wood-fuel and woodland tasks. DB

## Big Bioblitz– 9<sup>th</sup> Dec

CALLING ALL NATURE ENTHUSIASTS and curious minds! You're invited to be part of an exciting event exploring the biodiversity of Carron Valley's stunning woodland. Come and join us for our inaugural Bioblitz **at 11am**.

What's a Bioblitz? A Bioblitz is an event where Community residents come together to record as many species of plants, animals, fungi, and other organisms as possible within a specific area and timeframe. The main goal of a Bioblitz is to create a snapshot of the biodiversity present in a particular location. We would like to do this for our Community Woodland using the iNaturalist app and use the results to keep track of the plants and animals that live in our woodland.

Whether you're an expert naturalist or just keen to learn, everyone is welcome! It's perfect for families. All you need is access to a phone with the iNaturalist app - it can be one per family or group. All ages and levels of ability are welcome! We will meet at the cabin/events space at 11am. Please bring suitable (warm/waterproof) outdoor clothing and chunky footwear. After a short briefing, wee groups will set off to do the Bioblitz, returning half an hour later to compare notes. Remember to download the iNaturalist app on to your phone beforehand. Exciting new project!

# Carron Valley Biodiversity Project

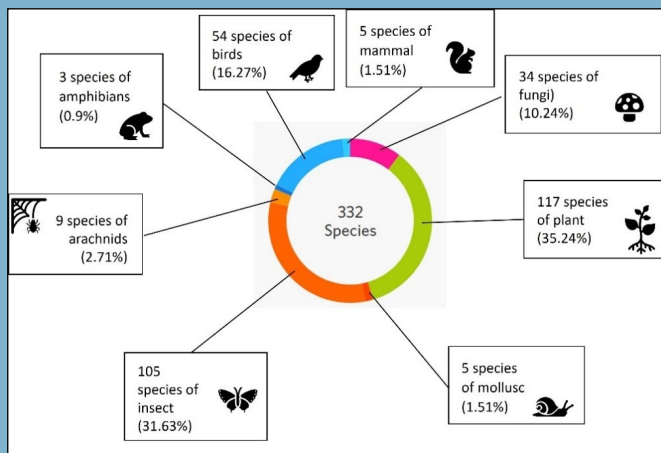
## Nature in Carron Valley:

The summer is over already and we're well and truly heading into autumn if not winter. It has been a great summer for local wildlife – I've seen noticeably more butterflies than previous summers, more sightings of interesting birds, such as jays and grouse, and of course the magnificent ospreys that nest around the local reservoirs and lochs. We've started seeing red kites more often too. Our local environment and wildlife are some of the things we love about living in Carron Valley!

## Carron Valley Biodiversity Project – 5 years on:

To that end, the Carron Valley Biodiversity Project was set up around 2018 to build up a picture of the flora and fauna in our community woodland and wider district and get residents more involved in their local nature. The project is hosted on a free, open-access citizen science app, iNaturalist. There's more information here: <https://www.valleyrenewables.co.uk/projects/current-projects/carron-valley-biodiversity-project/>

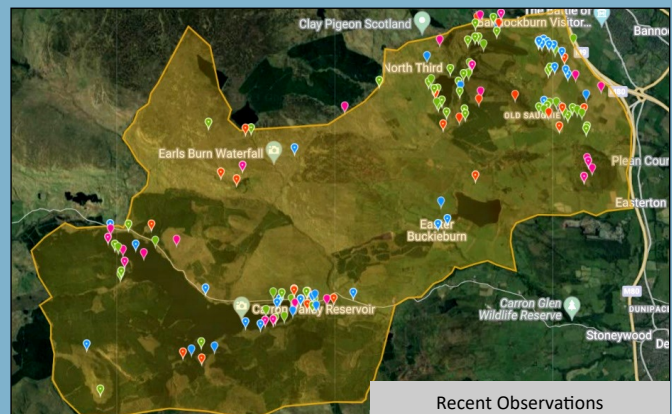
To date (Oct'23), 332 separate species have been recorded within the project area by 64 people across 566 observations, which is incredible! These include:



Map Legend	
<b>QUALITY GRADE</b>	<b>TAXONOMIC GROUPS</b>
📍 Research Grade	Amphibians, Birds, Ray-Finned Fishes, Mammals, Reptiles, Other Animals
📍 Needs ID, Casual	Mollusks, Arachnids, Insects
<b>GEOPRIVACY</b>	Plants
📍 Open	Fungi
📍 Obscured	Chromista
	Protozoans
	Unknown

The most commonly observed species is the European frog! What's even more incredible is that this will be an under-representation of our local biodiversity, as there are no doubt plenty of species that haven't been recorded yet.

The best kind of records are ones with photos so they can be verified by other members of the iNaturalist community. But it's not always easy to get photos, especially if it's something moving fast or spotted at a distance. If you're confident of the identification, record it anyway! You don't even need to be able to see the sighting to record it. Sounds, or photos of footprints or droppings, are also useful evidence.



All sightings recorded to the Carron Valley Biodiversity Project, Oct'23. Source: [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org)

## Why are these data useful:

Apart from being of general interest and fun for residents to see local wildlife, the data in this project are actually a really useful resource. Understanding nature is the first step in helping to conserve it. We can't take action to look after our wildlife if we don't know what's there. Information like this is important, especially as custodians of our community woodland, as it can help us to see changes in biodiversity that may require action. An example of this would be if any invasive non-native species were recorded; we may need to report or even remove these before they spread and pose a threat to our native fauna and flora.

Some species also act as indicators of healthy or unhealthy ecosystem condition. Species such as lichen (fungus and algae that grow together) are good indicators of air quality, mayflies are sensitive to water pollution, and the presence of top predators, such as otters, are indicative of a healthy food web. Changes in indicator species might give us an early warning of an ecological problem.

## Get involved:

Thank you to everyone who has been recording their sightings on iNaturalist!

If you're new to iNaturalist, do give it a go - the more the merrier! There are some helpful video tutorials on the iNaturalist website to help you get set up: <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/video+tutorials>

# Hydro Genie Review

I MET JIM BISSET at a workshop event the Valley Renewables put on for the local community. This event saw lots of businesses come together all with a common goal of reducing emissions, giving us warmer homes and saving us money.

When I met Jim, I couldn't quite believe that there was a system which promises to be as effective as he claims. However, after all the questions I had for him, he gave robust technical answers too, and it just made sense. "Where do I sign, I thought?"

We had the Hydro Genie system installed on the 23rd October this year. I have since been in touch with Jim and been observing the behaviour of the system both in results in our home and the data the Hydro Genie system produces.

Our house is fitted with a 20+ year old oil boiler and one or more radiators in each room. It was built in 1901 and is stone wall construction with no insulation other than that in the loft spaces. The performance of our heating system has clearly been improved with quicker heating times and less boiler firing. We also have a Hive heating control thermostat which can set a target temperature for our boiler to reach and then shut off.

One feature of the Hydro Genie system I was not aware of until I observed it is the economising mode. It switches to this once the system has come up to temperature. The Hydro Genie will look at the difference in temperature (delta T) between flow (out of the boiler) and return (water returning from all your radiators back to the boiler). With this real time actual data about your heating system, the Hydro Genie sees your radiators are hot enough to heat your home and turns your boiler off to allow your rooms to warm up using the heat already in your system. This is a level of sophistication I have not seen or heard about before. Other heating systems will have the boiler firing until the target temperature is reached or time clock setting has elapsed. This alone will save money and all the time achieving the same objective of heating your home but in a much more efficient way.

This is additional to the removal of dissolved oxygen in your heating system which gives a better heat transfer of your radiators into your home giving faster heating with less boiler firing time. This is where we can see potential for reduced running costs and emissions. In removing dissolved oxygen from your heating system, you will also reduce the internal oxidation within your heating system again improving its efficiency, reducing cold spots on your radiators due to sludge build up, and increased flow through the system.

Many eco-friendly projects have clear benefits but few are affordable and accessible to the majority of consumers. Jim's concept system can be fitted to any central heating system which uses water in the system (Gas, oil, heat pump, etc). He says this can also be carried forward to any improved system you may wish to fit. For example if you have an oil boiler and want to fit a heat pump or upgrade your boiler.

The government has set the bar high with their targets of lowering emissions. Many share the same view and desire to join a more eco-friendly way of living with the benefit of reduced costs. However, most of these big home improvements require large, long term investment to recover this investment and lower regular bills. The Hydro Genie system I think fills a gap in the market. It's an angle nobody else I've heard of is coming from, with a relatively low initial installation cost when compared to larger costly projects like solar or heat pumps which also promise similar results. I believe this is something many of us can do now to dramatically lower our emissions and costs. If Jim's claims are true, I should break even in three to four years and from then on, continue to enjoy this system.

Valley Renewables is offering a grant to help with this project which in my view brings it closer to the majority in affordability with a shorter term investment (<https://www.valleyrenewables.co.uk/grants/household-energy-efficiency-grants/>). It stands as a very attractive project to invest in so why not contact Jim for more information [jim@hydro-genie.co.uk](mailto:jim@hydro-genie.co.uk) and visit his web site [www.hydro-genie.co.uk](http://www.hydro-genie.co.uk)? May I take this opportunity to thank those who set up and helped with the workshop at Carron Valley which Jim and others attended, helping us all have more eco-friendly, warmer homes.

BJ



Warm Up / Costs Down grants now available. See <https://www.valleyrenewables.co.uk/grants/warm-up-costs-down-grant/>

# Smart Meters Ain't So Smart

WE ARE BOMBARDED with adverts pushing us to move to Smart meters – Einstein for one – telling us that we can control our energy use if we get a smart meter. But can we?

The process below was developed by me based on discussions with Home Energy Scotland and my energy supplier at the time (SO Energy). Both confirmed that with Smart meters energy companies no longer need to rely on estimated meter readings. On the plus side the consumer can see their energy usage and cost on a periodic – daily, weekly monthly – basis so no nasty surprises. However, they also confirmed that Smart meters cannot be used to reduce your energy usage in anything approaching a “smart” way. If the consumer wants to do that, then how “smart” is a Smart meter? *They only consider electricity usage.* Generally speaking, oil and gas are only used for a few things, eg. central heating, hot water and cooking. Reducing usage is relatively easy – turn down your thermostat, have your heating on for less time, turn down your boiler, cook using slow cookers or air fryers. The free app I will refer to later can be used to measure gas usage if your gas is metered via your Smart meter. Electricity on the other hand is used on a large range of different appliances, some are high use, some low use, some used daily, some used weekly, some used constantly. So will I save money? Maybe. You may not be able to identify significant savings. In the worst case you will understand precisely where your electricity is being used. The best case may be healthy savings following modification of how you use your appliances.

**The problem with Smart meters:** Let's assume that I want to reduce my electricity usage. Using my Smart meter, I see that I used 13.63 kWh (kilo Watt hours) of electricity yesterday. The unit here – kWh – is weird but don't worry, the number is the important part. Yesterday, I know that I used TV and Sky box, computer and broadband box, washing machine – maybe twice, dish washer – again maybe twice, air fryer, 2 fridges and 3 freezers, electric clothes airer, lights, gas boiler (uses electricity), radio, charged my mobile phone and others. If I want to reduce my usage, obviously I can use my washing machine less, cut down my TV watching but how much difference will it make? My goal is to reduce my consumption by 25%. What do I need to stop doing? What do I need to reduce? What doesn't make any difference? eg. If I reduce my TV watching by 2 hours per day, how much do I save? A Smart meter cannot help me with this except in a very crude way, eg. if I don't use my washing machine today then my consumption today will obviously be less than yesterday but I am sure that the rest of my usage will not be the same so any change may be due to multiple different reasons – maybe I watched TV less, maybe I baked a cake in the oven etc. *Both Home Energy Scotland and SO Energy confirmed that Smart meters cannot be used like this.*

## So how do I reduce my electricity usage?

**1. Understand how much you are using:** The easiest way to do this is to look at your bill. It will show you how many kWh of energy you have used during the billing period (monthly?). A more involved method is to get an app that connects to your Smart meter. I used a free app called Bright, available on iPhone and iMAC, possibly other platforms. There are a few steps to register but after a few hours, my energy consumption data is within the app and I can see my consumption on 30min, hourly, daily, weekly and monthly bases. It does not work in real-time but I have found it very useful to reduce my energy usage.

**2. Understand how much each appliance uses:** The recommendation from Home Energy Scotland was to purchase an Electricity Usage Monitor. I purchased one from Amazon. To build up your energy usage profile, you need to plug this into a socket, plug your appliance into the monitor, reset it and let the appliance run for some time. After 2 hours for example, the monitor will tell you how many kWh of electricity the appliance has used. You do need to repeat this several times depending how many appliances you have but, after a week or so, you should have a good idea of which appliances in your home are using the most electricity. You will end up with a table listing the usage of all tested outlets.

**3. Make your plan:** Now that you have this data, make your plan. In the month prior to making any changes, we used 806 kWh of electricity. Since I want to make a sizeable reduction, I am looking at those items that have used most electricity. Some obvious conclusions: The TV, Sky box, broadband router, iMAC computer, garage fridge, Wi-Fi extender, bedside lights and radio use a very small amount of electricity and so are not a priority to look at. The heated airer, old garage freezer, new garage freezer, dishwasher, fridge and kettle are worth looking at. We stopped using the heated airer for periods any longer than 2 hours. We changed the settings on both freezers (the food is still frozen solid!) and for the fridge, we use the dishwasher less, and only boil the kettle with the water we need. We use the washing machine less. We use the air fryer and slow cooker much more.



## What did we achieve?

Has this been a drastic change in lifestyle? No. Of course there will be a seasonal element to usage. The report from the Bright app is completely mirrored in our electricity bills. One further advantage of the Bright app is that, if you are minded to and are appropriately nerdy (!), you can download your hourly usage, upload into a spreadsheet and then turn the full battery of data analysis techniques onto your data. There are other apps that can be used in conjunction with Smart meters. Home Energy Scotland told me about Bright – I tried it and found it useful for what I wanted. Please note that you will be sharing your usage data with the Bright app. If this is not something you wish to do, you can still carry out the above process – you just will not be able to see the results until you get your next bill.

MB

## Pomona Apple Day

THE SUN SHONE on a very happy October afternoon as another Pomona Day came to fruition. Apples were scatted and pressed to produce multiple litres of golden nectar.

Andrew Lear identified all the apples types we didn't know and answered many questions on growing apple trees.



A very tasty barbeque was provided by Team Willgerod, and residents' surplus fruit and veg made available for a donation to Strathcarron Hospice. A great day.

## Energy Efficiency Day

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU must go to the exhibitors at the September Energy Efficiency event for giving up a Saturday afternoon to explain their passion for helping us reduce our household energy costs. Endless questions were asked by a steady flow of residents throughout the afternoon, and patiently answered by the experts.



Once again we were provided with wonderful, appetising foody treats by Jennifer Willgerod. It was worth being there just for that.

The information available on the day was part of our big Energy Efficiency Retro-fitting Project that aims to help households reduce their energy costs and the overall carbon footprint of our Community.



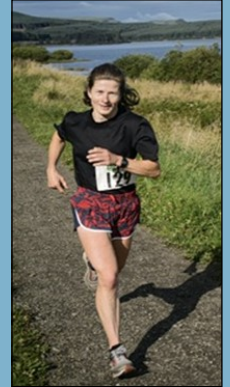
The stage of the project we're at right now is surveying a representative sample of houses from amongst those who answered the recent survey. This will go on until about February and from this we will have an idea of what can and should be done, and what the

total cost of rolling the project out to all the households that wish to be involved.

## Tom Robb Memorial

THE 2023 RACE TOOK place on the sunny, midge-filled morning of Sat 26<sup>th</sup> Aug. Thankfully the midges failed to dampen the enthusiasm of the 140 runners who lined up to race the 7 miles of hilly trails around Carron Valley. This year's race saw 79 men, 60 women and 1 non-binary person starting.

Our previous record holders were both racing, but there was plenty of competition from other runners. This resulted in local runner, Edel Mooney (Ochil Hill Runners) winning the female race once again, with previous podium finisher, Andrew Kirk (Kirkintilloch Olympians), improving his previous placing to take first finisher this year.



We had runners representing 26 different running clubs, and also a large number who do not run with a club. Local clubs such as Central Athletics club, Wee County Harriers and Ochils Hill Runners were well represented. Similarly, we had volunteers from both near and far helping out in a variety of roles, such as marshalling, registration and manning the ever popular bake stall. Ochils Mountain Rescue once more provided first aid cover, but thankfully had a quiet morning.

The race is once again very thankful for support provided by Valley Renewables, Killearn Co-op, Barraston Contracts, Forestry and Land Scotland, and Clan Ranald.

Working together with a fabulous bunch of runners, bakers and volunteers, we raised £4,577.98, to be shared between Alzheimers Scotland and Ochils Mountain Rescue.

## New Trustees

AT THE RECENT VRG AGM three new trustee / directors were appointed. These are -

Peter Shand - from Auchenbowie area

Brian Young - from Cauldbarns

Dugald McAlpine - from Carron Valley

You will be able to learn more about them in the VRG website in due course. Each brings their own particular talents to the Board, and the addition of the three brings the Board back up to full strength.

Leaving the Board this year were Nicolas Sinclair, who made some considerable and important innovations during his time as chair, Iain MacFarlane, who as the longest serving board member contributed much wisdom throughout his tenure, and Carol Simpson, a person of many varied talents. All three will be missed. Best wishes and thanks to all.

## Home Energy Hacks

THE FOLLOWING ARE courtesy of Tanya Ewing, from Glaze & Save\*, one of the Energy Efficiency day exhibitors. Some will cost you nothing, others low cost and some possibly a lot. Do whichever you can according to your need and the size of your wallet. Everything will help to reduce your household costs. There are grants available through Home Energy Scotland and through the VRG.

No cost:

1. Turning your heating controls down by 1° can save up to 10% of your annual heating bill.
2. Closing your blinds or curtains 1hr before dark keeps in an average of 2° warmth.
3. Spending 1min less in the shower can save £80 a year.
4. Move your bed away from an external wall or insulate the headboard.

Low cost:

1. Insulate gaps around pipes and fill gaps in flooring or skirting boards.
2. Choose extractor fans that have external covers.
3. Use draught excluders under doors and tape around windows and doors.
4. Insulate your hot water tank with 20-80mm cover.
5. Use a plug-in energy use meter to check use. You can save over £200 a year by turning off just 4 items.

Medium cost:

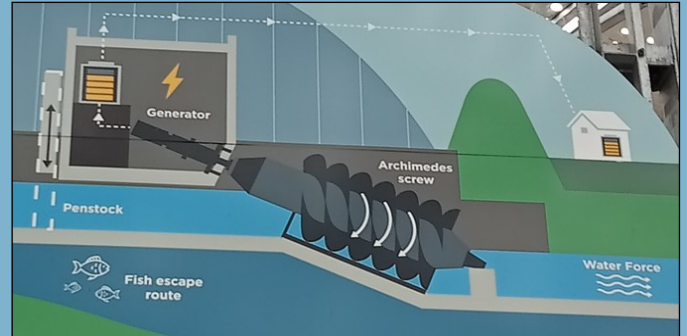
1. Change to insulated blinds and get curtain linings.
2. Hang a heavy fabric curtain in front of external doors.
3. Consider using thermal lining wallpaper on external walls when next re-decorating.

Higher cost:

1. Insulate all floors, walls, ceilings and loft spaces.
2. Double glaze or secondary glaze\* your windows.

## Water Power

AT A RECENT Renantis Forum in Inverness, we had the chance to see, and hear more about, HydroNess, an innovative power generation scheme on the River Ness. It uses two Archimedes Screws to produce enough power for half the needs of the nearby sports centre and swimming pool. Here's how it works.



Water from the river is channelled into a penstock into which is placed an Archimedes Screw (or 2). The power from the water turns the screw, which turns the turbine, and generates electricity. The energy produced is then changed from DC to AC to feed to the place of need, into batteries or to the grid, while the water flows back into the river.

The system is great for places where there isn't a huge head of water. There may be locations in our Community where this could work. The possibility has been discussed from time to time. Perhaps now is the moment. Does anyone want to look into this further? If so contact the editor.

## Chainsaw Course

RECENTLY FOUR INTREPID RESIDENTS submitted to a 5-day chainsaw course run by a professional training company. Two subsequently returned to do the 1-day assessment and now are fully certified, and the other two will be arranging to do that shortly. This course and participants' PPE was funded by the VRG in return for some time spent in the Community woodland doing some of the straight forward woodland maintenance work required over the coming years. Well done to all. Look out for other courses.

## Our Elected Representatives



Evelyn Tweed MSP [evelyn.tweed.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:evelyn.tweed.msp@parliament.scot) 01786 235 225

Alyn Smith MP [alyn.smith.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alyn.smith.mp@parliament.uk) 0207 219 3000

Cllr Neil Benny [bennyn@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:bennyn@stirling.gov.uk) 01786 233 124

Cllr Scott Farmer [farmers@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:farmers@stirling.gov.uk) 01786 233 131

Cllr Jen Preston [prestonj@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:prestonj@stirling.gov.uk) 01786 233 126

## Create an Indoor Garden

JUST BECAUSE IT'S NOT so great for growing stuff outside at this time of the year, it doesn't mean you can't create a wee garden inside. It's perfect for doing on a wet weekend. Also you can impress your pals by telling them you have made a Terrarium. They will say 'what does that mean'? and you can say - the word comes from the Latin words "terra" (earth) plus "arium" (place or receptacle). In reality it is a clear container usually of glass with a lid, but could be plastic, in which a miniature garden is created. The sealed space in effect provides a water cycle - the transpiration from the plants condenses on the sides of the container and runs down to provide water.



So what do you need?

- ◇ A clean, dry, clear container with a lid - jam jar, coffee or sweetie jar, or even something as big as a demi-john or carboy.
- ◇ Put in some small pebbles, gravel or vermiculite.
- ◇ Add a layer of charcoal (from the cinders of a fire).
- ◇ Then a layer of potting soil.
- ◇ Then the plants - biggest ones go in first.
- ◇ Place in other stones, or some moss or sand to cover up the soil if you want to.
- ◇ Put in any finishing touches or decorations.
- ◇ Put on the lid.



Your terrarium may be opened once a week, allowing evaporation of excess moisture from the air and walls of the container so as to prevent growth of mould or algae, which may damage plants and discolour the sides of the container. Once you've had some practice, if you fancy having a shot using a large carboy, contact the editor who has one going spare. Have fun.

For more information - <https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-make-terrariums-848007>

## Bird Feeders

IT'S NOW THE TIME when our feathered friends could do with a bit of help in finding food. Of course you might have some bird feeders stored from last year but if not you could make some from toilet roll holders or evergreen cones. Here's how.

You need:

- ◇ A toilet roll (or a pine cone)
- ◇ String
- ◇ Smooth P-nut butter or cooking fat
- ◇ Bird seed
- ◇ 2 or 3 long sticks or twigs

Method:

Tie a loop of string to the toilet roll or cone to act as a hanger. Cover the outside with P-nut butter or fat. Then roll it on a plate of bird seed. Push the sticks through as perches. Find a tree, bush or fence to hang it on. Then watch, camera in hand! Send photos to the editor.



## Grants Paid

From 1st July except 2 months closed.

Energy Efficiency (10)	£8,984
(plus Household grant)	£480
Young Person's (1)	£250
Student Bursaries (4)	£2,000
Get Growing (8)	£2,557
Warm Up (13)	£1,797
E-Bikes (3)	£1,500
Community Groups (3)	£5,763
<b>Total (43)</b>	<b>£23,331</b>

New applications are encouraged for all grants. However, Energy Efficiency ones of £1,000 are currently limited to one per household.

## Contact Us

VRG Secretary:

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[www.valleyrenewables.co.uk](http://www.valleyrenewables.co.uk)

or Carron Valley Connections private Facebook group

Community Council Secretary:

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Editor:

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## Investments

THE VALUE OF THE Investment Fund at 14/11/23 is £447,076, this is a drop of 0.33% over the last 12months. The estimated annual income is £11,855.

## CVDCC

THE NEXT MEETING of the Community Council takes place on Wed 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. Contact [cvdcc.sec@gmail.com](mailto:cvdcc.sec@gmail.com) for the link to attend or to comment.