

Carron Valley & District

Carron Valley & District Newsletter

Issue 42, May'25

It Ain't Half Hot!

JUST LIKE THE OLD days when springs were hot and dry. Unfortunately, that usually meant that it turned into a monsoon season by the school holidays! We'll see. This is Scotland after all, where we are used to the weather being.....variable! We've definitely had more sunshine this year so far than in the whole of '24.

That all means it's been a great start to the growing season, so long as you remembered to water things. And that means of course, there will be an abundance of entries for the Flower & Produce Show on 9th August. Yeh! And, lots of apples for juicing on the Pomona Day.

Hopefully, by saying all that won't have put a curse on the weather. It will rain eventually I suppose so be ready for it. In the meantime, water is getting scarce according to SEPA. Don't go mad with it.



Flower & Produce Show & BBQ

9TH AUGUST AT THE EVENT SPACE IN CARRON VALLEY

Will you be rhubarb ready, your runners racing and tomatoes tantalising? We're all standing by to see bountiful beetroot, scrumptious scones, soaring sunflowers and juicy jams!

That apart, this year you won't need to have a regulation jar for your preserves so long as it is sterilised first, and you'd be best to bring your own vase for displaying your flowers. As last year there will be rosettes and a small cash prize for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each class.

There will be some parking by the event space where the marquees and all the action will be, and more as required at the FLS parking area for a small charge. Exhibitors and organisers may park in the community woodland beyond the event space once they have off-loaded.

We will be hoping that the new hall will be completed and most building debris cleared out of the way by then so that you can have a wee peek. At least, instead of the port-a-loos, this year you should be able to test out the new toilets.

There will be some onsite activities and other exhibits, and some young enthusiasts will be selling some stuff for Strathcarron Hospice so bring CASH. Also on sale will be some of the wonderful produce from Carron Growers and, towards the end of the afternoon, exhibits may be bought for a donation to Strathcarron Hospice.

Timings: 10.00 setting up; 11.00 -12.00 bring entries; 12.00 -12.30 judging; 12.30 -> >> >>> Jennifer's Brilliant Barbeque.

Hope to see you all there. Any friends or family you may have staying with you are also welcome.

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Community Bio Blitz

SPRING IS MY FAVOURITE time of year and the weather didn't disappoint for our quarterly bioblitz of the community woodland on 10th May. It's great to see all the new plant growth, not just in established plants but also newly seeded saplings since last year.



The woodland birds were in full song too, busy fetching food and nesting material for their broods. We were serenaded by cuckoos and willow warblers throughout the bioblitz! There were also plenty of butterflies around - the orange tips are gorgeous, although they were too fast for us to capture on our iNaturalist project.

Taking part in the Bioblitz is a great way to get close to nature and learn more about the environment on our doorstep. Do come and join in the next one! Our summer bioblitz will take place on 9th August at 11am, the same day as the community Flower & Produce show. Meet at the hut at 11am, with weather-appropriate clothing and a smart phone for recording your sightings.

EB



Also Esther Brooker will be giving demonstrations, for youngsters **and** grown-ups, during the Flower & Produce Show afternoon on the 9th August. Learn how to -

- Record your encounters
- Help scientists
- Connect with experts
- Find projects
- Build your knowledge
- Hold your own Bioblitz event

Bring your smart phone or tablet and have the iNaturalist app downloaded on to it. If you need help with that, Esther is the expert. After the session you will want to Bioblitz in your own area.

Pomona Apple Day - 25th Oct

THIS SHOULD BE a bumper year for the apple harvest in the autumn judging by the blossom out at the moment. If you have lots of flowers close to one another, it might be wise to remove the odd one or two so that the remainder have more space and energy to grow. It's could be a case of less is better.

The event will take place in the community event space at the woodland, and there will be the usual opportunity to scrat and juice your fruit. Come armed with some bottles, a knife and some muscle power. There will be an opportunity for those who have livestock that like pulped apples to take away a quantity. If that's what you'd like to do, bring a plastic trug or two.

More information on timing and details in the next issue.

Woodland Events

HERE'S WHAT IS COMING UP.

June 14: Maintenance and planting

Aug 9: Flower & Produce day

Sept 13: Wood fuel plus tube removal

Oct 11: Wood fuel plus tube removal

Oct 25: POMONA apple day

Nov 9: Wood fuel plus Sitka bashing

Dec 6: Xmas Trees and maintenance

There will be something for everyone to do regardless of ability. The more the merrier.

Woodland Notes

LAST WINTER'S STORMS brought down lots of conifers on the north east side of the track through the community woodland. This will be dealt with by felling the windblow and, it is hoped, the adjacent and now weakened stand of conifers. The area will be replanted with some Norway Spruce and lots of native trees.

Some of the windblow will be milled into lengths to help disguise part of the bright blue container, plus some for community wood fuel, and the remainder sold to cover the cost of the work.

On the woodland volunteer days, so far in 2025 efforts have seen removal of tubes and stakes from establishing saplings with a 'wood' now appearing from the path round the pond, planting out seedlings and pulling Sitka.

In addition, there have been three wood fuel days with well over 100 builders' bag-loads of logs collected or delivered around to residents. This is an incredible community effort saving residents more than £7,000 in heating costs.

Carron Valley woodland volunteers are amazing. For such a small community, 60+ volunteers over 4 sessions have planted, pulled, removed, split, processed, loaded, delivered, unloaded, got wet, laughed, shared welcome hot soup and snacks, chatted, taught, learnt, and enjoyed. Thank you.

DB

"A braw bunch o' folk,
we ken their worth 'n thank them fir it."



Good Green Futures

IF YOU HAVE A BUILDING or DIY project in the planning, consider sourcing some of your materials from Good Green Futures. Or if you are a building contractor with a job on the go and you're fed up sending your small surpluses to landfill, get in touch GGF who'd be delighted to help you out.

The GGF shop is based within the Stirling Reuse Hub, which is an exciting space in Springkerse. It is dedicated to selling high quality pre-owned DIY Tools, and construction and landscaping materials. The selection includes - building materials, timber & sheet materials, windows & joinery stuff, landscaping & gardens stuff, plumbing parts, and multiple fixings. Good Green Futures is also part of the Community RePaint Network and has a wide selection of ReColour Paint in 5 litre tins.



So, if you have a project in the offing, pop down to the Reuse Hub before spending a small fortune on what you need and check it out first. Here's where it is -

Stirling Reuse Hub, 4 Borrowmeadow Road, Stirling, FK7 7UW; enquiries@goodgreenfutures.org.uk ; 01786 643 396

Community Council Update

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL is sadly to lose one of its members. Maureen Berry has resigned as she is moving out of the area. The CC would like to thank Maureen for her contribution to the Council, and particularly for her efforts to raise awareness of the Local Place Plan which she has been collating ready for including in the new Stirling Council Plan. We wish her well.

As the Community Council consists of Six members (no more, no less) can we ask that any resident of the Carron Valley & District Community Council area interested in being on the Council contact the secretary via cvdcc.sec@gmail.com ? It a great way of keeping abreast of what's going on and of making a difference.

Meetings currently take place via Zoom but, once the community hall is up and running, we hope to have many of the meetings as face-to-real-face rather than via the web.

Community Hall - Progress Report

CONSTRUCTION WORK IS moving on apace and on track for completion by the end of July. The floor slab is down, timber frame and insulation is complete, windows and doors are measured and on order, roof trusses up, sheeted and weather-proofed, the first fix electrics have started and the first fix plumbing is due next week. The road and car park are bottomed out.

We have been successful in gaining outside funding of £16,000 for the solar PV and battery storage. This will substantially reduce our energy costs for running the Hall, and also its carbon footprint. Our M&E engineer will review the wiring of the solar PV, batteries and a future generator to ensure the Hall can function during emergencies and power outages as a 'warm space' for the Community.

An application has been made for funding towards the cost of the 'white goods' for the kitchen - fridge /freezer, dishwasher, ovens - with the intention of instructing these through the contract to avoid VAT, and to ensure co-ordination of the plumbing and wiring. This equipment, together with stainless steel worktops and splash-backs, sinks and induction hob already in the building contract, will provide a catering standard kitchen for Community groups and hall users.

We have had to take some early decisions on the external and internal colour schemes for the Hall. Externally we are running with anthracite grey for the roof, wall cladding, windows and shutters. The main entrance door will be a rust red. Internally the walls and ceilings will be off white with mid grey vinyl floor coverings, white window frames and rust red doors. Tiling in the bathrooms will be rust red too. These colour contrasts are required to meet visually impaired access standards.



The Community Hall management team now has 12 members, is meeting monthly, and working hard to flesh out details and operating systems for running the hall. A visit to Kippen Village Hall to meet the management team there and learn from their experience is planned for the end of this month.

RF

An Introduction from SW / FLS Ranger

HI EVERYONE,

I joined the Scottish Water ranger team last year and, since January 2025, I've been covering Carron Valley, North Third, Cocksburn reservoir near Dumyat and The Kilpatricks through the partnership with Forestry and Land Scotland.

As a hill runner, I've run the trails around Carron Valley and made it to the top of Meikle Bin several times. Now, however, it's interesting to view the site through a ranger lens, and I'm noticing the diversity of bird and plant species and learning about the history of the site. I'm getting to know the local community too.

Part of my role is to engage with visitors to promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and importantly, water safety, ensuring everyone is safe and leaves no trace after their visit.

I'm hoping to get involved in upcoming community events (definitely looking forward to the Flower and Produce show and BBQ!) and will be down on site most weekends through the summer.

If you see me out and about, please do say hello!

Or you can contact me at helen.rountree@forestryandland.gov.scot

Feel free to get in touch if you have any questions.

Helen Rountree

Scottish Water Partnership Ranger

Forestry and Land Scotland, Suite 0-3, Titan Enterprise Business Centre, 1 Aurora Avenue, Queens Quay, Clydebank, G81 1BF

m: +44 (0) 7350 436457 e: helen.rountree@forestryandland.gov.scot

HR

* Many thanks to Helen for helping at one of the wood-fuel days. Her help was much appreciated.



North Third Spruce-Up

A TEAM OF LITTER PICKERS organised by Helen Rountree of FLS have recently cleared a load of rubbish from North Third Reservoir. Joined by members of the CC and VRG, all had a successful day followed by coffee and biscuits. The dogs enjoyed it too.

Monthly litter picks will take place at North Third throughout the summer on the following dates:

- Sunday 18th May
- Wednesday 25th June
- Wednesday 16th July
- Wednesday 6th August



The QR code takes you to the Eventbrite website for more details. Did someone mention coffee and biscuits!

Have You Got Yours?

OFGEM IS WARNING that houses that still have an RTS (Radio Teleswitch Service) old style electric meter by the 30th June, risk losing their heating or hot water. These older meters depend on a radio signal from the BBC to make them work properly. This is being switched off on 30th June.

If your electricity supplier has been in touch about making the necessary change over to a smart meter, don't ignore them. You need to make the change or risk the chilly consequences. You can go to your supplier's website to find out what to do.

A smart meter will give you a similar service to your RTS meter. You'll also get other benefits, including:

- Electricity readings submitted automatically
- Access to 'smart meter only' tariffs
- The ability to monitor your energy usage
- Accurate bills based on the electricity you've used, not estimates

Find out more about replacing your meter check out - [Replacing your Radio Teleswitch electricity meter | Ofgem](#)

ECO4



ARE YOU A TENANT or a homeowner in the Community who claims a means-tested personal benefit listed below. If so, you could be eligible for this FREE scheme to help reduce your energy bills.

- > Universal Credit
- > Pension Credit Savings Credit
- > Child Tax Credits
- > Income support
- > Working Tax Credits
- > Employment & support Allowance
- > Jobseekers Allowance
- > Housing Benefit
- > Pension Credit Guarantee Credit

Possible available works:

- > Internal / External Wall Insulation
- > Boiler / Heater Upgrades
- > Loft Insulation
- > Solar Panels (if you don't have gas heating)

To arrange your free survey:

- > Call - 0113 518 2000
- > Email - info@switchenergynetwork.co.uk
- > Whatsapp or Text - 07432 806 888
- > Web - www.switchenergynetwork.co.uk

Wild Garlic

WILD GARLIC (*ALLIUM URSINUM*) is native to the UK where it can be found in moist woodland. Locally it is most noticeable growing along the roadside of the narrow, twisty Denovan road, where you wouldn't even need to get out of your car to collect it!

It has many colloquial names - Ramsons, Cow's leek (they love it apparently; some Devon dairy farmers have had their milk rejected because of the garlicky flavour imparted to it by the cows grazing on the plant!) and Bear's garlic.

It is a bulbous, perennial herbaceous plant, with bright green lanceolate shaped leaves, and characteristic white star like flowers, on a flower stem that is triangular - a good identifier, if the characteristic smell hasn't already alerted you to its presence. All parts of the plant are edible.

It is a popular plant to use in making pesto, in soups, or just cut through pasta dishes, much as you would spinach. It is also used in the Van province of Turkey, to produce their specialised Van herbal cheese. Mrs Beaton in her 1866 'Household Management' includes a recipe for Bengal Mango Chutney, brought back from India by an English lady who became quite celebrated for the excellence of her Eastern Relish!

Wild garlic is credited with many medicinal and homeopathic qualities - as a stimulant, antiseptic, and as a syrup for asthma, coughs, also chronic bronchitis. It is often used for treating cardiovascular, respiratory and digestive problems as well as for the sterilisation of wounds.

It contains various minerals, and so has been called the magnesium king of plants.

HR



You & Your Smart Meter

A SMART METER CAN help you manage your electricity consumption more effectively. Having one, can enable...

- A wider choice of electricity tariff, including time-of-use tariffs.
- A modern alternative metering with on- and off-peak periods.
- Monitoring energy consumption in real time on an in-home display (IHD) monitor paired with your smart meter.
- Participation in demand-side response initiatives eg. participate in saving sessions and get rewarded with bill credits.
- Live data and history of electricity exporting from your home to the grid, eg when you have solar PV or battery storage, etc.
- More accurate billing - no more estimated bills, only actual readings go to your supplier - only pay what you actually used.

By using a smart meter wisely, householders can be more mindful of their energy consumption, can save money and can reduce their carbon footprint. Want to find out even more about your smart meter's functionality? Have you Googled the make and model of meter that your home has? If you don't already have a smart meter, contact your electricity supplier who can arrange a meter replacement at no cost to you. Used effectively, you could be saving hundreds, if not thousands, of £s. SP



Old Sauchie Wasteland Restoration Project

THE VRG HAS ENABLED us to change a wasteland thicket of brambles and nettles into a beautiful space with an orchard. The site, jointly owned by eight properties, was originally a wasteland used for dumping building materials – huge stones, bricks, slates, waste wood, etc. This was then abandoned for the next 25 years while potential uses for the land were discussed but never actioned. Brambles, nettles and thistles took advantage of the inaction resulting in a 2-metre-high impenetrable thicket of thorns and stingers.

However, the Small Community Grant from VRG enabled us to hire Taylor Trees to clear the area with a 'Flailbot', an incredible machine that chewed up all the brambles, bushes and small trees and spat them out behind as a fine mulch. Fifteen fruit trees have now been planted, comprising six apple varieties, two plums, two cherries, two pears, a crab apple, a damson and a quince. With volunteer support we have now cleared an additional area of brambles and young regenerating trees and shrubs to create half a hectare ripe for further planting and development.



The transformation has been remarkable and we can now see the potential for the area. Some 60 different species of wildflowers and grasses have already shown themselves and many different insects, and even newts have been seen. No doubt most of them were there before, hidden by the brambles, but are now visible and are growing rapidly, released from being suppressed by the overgrowth. Of course, the nettles and brambles are also regrowing apace but are being controlled by strimming and, with some continued maintenance and the addition of an appropriate wildflower seed mix, a meadow flora will soon develop rich in flowers and insect life.

We are now considering options to further enhance the site. Possibilities include additional planting of species to be enjoyed by bees and butterflies and a bench and barbecue area to be enjoyed by the residents and volunteers who have created the site with the support of the Small Community Grant. The part played by VRG in enabling this transformation is greatly appreciated. CL

Investments

THE VALUE OF OUR FUND is £363,043 (after drawings to date for the Community Hall).

66% is held in cash and 34% in investments.

The estimated annual income is £13,948 with the fund is up 6.52% in last 12 months.

Let's Repeat

FOLLOWING SOME SUCCESS in putting pressure on the Roads' Department to fix the C10 and other routes, let's do the same with the Police.

If you want to help the police catch the boy racers, speeders, fly tippers, suspicious characters and other ne'er-do-wells in the act, **call 111** to report what you're witnessing. Get an incident report number as well. Of course if it's an emergency call the usual **999**.

Let's not accept criminal and bad behaviour as OK.

Creative Homecare

OUR COMMUNITY HAS a strong connection to Strathcarron Hospice as we all know. But did also you know that it has a subsidiary social enterprise called Creative Homecare? It provides private homecare to help enable customers to live in their own homes independently. This operates across Falkirk, Stirling and Bridge of Allan.

The unique thing about this is that every penny made through the service is reinvested into the Hospice. Services are tailored to help customers remain in their own homes, staying in control of their own care for as long as they are able.

If you are interested to know more, contact administrator@creativehomecare.co.uk or 01324 827394.



Our Local Place Plan

LOCAL PLACE PLANS (LPPS) in Scotland empower communities to shape their development and land use through a collaborative planning process.

They offer the opportunity for a community-led, collaborative approach to creating great local places. LPPs can support community aspirations on the big challenges for a future Scotland, eg. responding to the global climate emergency and tackling inequalities. It is vital that local people have the opportunity to engage meaningfully and have a positive influence in the future planning of development in their areas. The aim is to significantly enhance engagement in development planning, effectively empowering communities to play a pro-active role in defining the future of their places.

As part of the LPP process which the Community Council has been working and widely consulting on, a simple form is enclosed to give you the opportunity to make comment. These need to be returned by 30th June in order that our LPP can be taken account of in the local authority's Local District Plan. Please take this rare chance of make your views known.

Grants Update



WITH MOST OF THE GRANT pots having been long since spent, and our new financial year being 1st July, a lot of discussion has been taking place about the grant schemes and their operation. We have been listening to comments made, favourable and critical, and have come to the conclusion that the schemes are victims of their own success. More residents know about, and are therefore using the schemes, so they tend to get used up more quickly. The sad fact though is that the amount of money available for distribution to individual residents or households **is limited**. While a time may come when we have access to more funding, right now it is only the Craigenfelt (Engie) and Craiggannet (Clean Earth Energy) windfarm operators whose community benefit funding can be used in this way.

Although not yet absolutely set in stone, it is proposed that the following amounts will form the basis of the individual and household grant schemes for the following financial year.

E-bike	Up to £500
Student Bursary	Up to £500
Children & Young People	Up to £250
Warm Up / Costs Down	Up to £200
Get the Valley Growing	Up to £500 (large), up to £250 small items)
Energy Efficiency	Up to £2000

Due to staff holidays, applications will not be processed until the beginning of August and, with the exception of one of the grants, will be on a first come first served basis. Energy Efficiency applications will be open only to those who did not receive such a grant in the 1st July'24 to 30th June'25 period. Details of the new grant schemes will be put on the VRG website (www.valleyrenewables.co.uk) after the information has been updated.

Community Grants for projects with the potential to benefit the whole community will remain up to £5000 for small projects. Large projects of over £5000 will be considered. This funding comes from the Earlsburn / Kingsburn (Nadara) windfarm community benefit fund.

Pedal for Parkinson's Tom Robb Race

JUST A WEE REMINDER that the annual cycling event in aid of Parkinson's takes place on 31st August. The 50 miles intermediate route explores Flanders Moss, passing the Lake of Menteith into Fintry before ascending to the Carron Valley Reservoir. It's possible there might some traffic disruption so keep an eye open on the B818 and the C10 that day.



If you are into cycling, the three routes - 25, 50 and 100 miles - are still available to enter at the reduced rate, so sign up now. For more information - [Pedal Trossachs | Parkinson's UK | Cycle for Charity](#)

TOM ROBB LIVED and farmed near the Carron Valley for over 50 years. In later life he developed dementia. In 2012 he went for a walk in the local forest and hasn't been seen since despite extensive searches by many.

The Memorial Trail Race will take place on Sat 23rd Aug to raise funds for Alzheimer Scotland and Ochils Mountain Rescue team to support the amazing work they do.

The 7-miles race takes place within the Carron Valley Forest and it's not too late to enter. Registration will be open from 7:30am and will close 15 minutes before the start of the race at 9am. Price £17. All the information can be found here -

<https://www.tomrobbmemorialtrailrace.com/>

Our Elected Representatives



Evelyn Tweed MSP evelyn.tweed.msp@parliament.scot 01786 235 255

Chris Kane MP chris.kane.mp@parliament.uk 01786 652 345

Cllr Neil Benny bennyn@stirling.gov.uk 01786 233 124

Cllr Scott Farmer farmers@stirling.gov.uk 01786 233 131

Cllr Jen Preston prestonj@stirling.gov.uk 01786 233 126

Beetle of the Month

BEECH LEAF MINER

SOME INSECTS ARE VERY difficult to see but leave conspicuous signs that reveal their presence. Find a beech tree or hedge near you at this time of year and many young leaves will probably be riddled with small holes. These are made by a flea beetle, the Beech Leaf Miner (*Orchestes fagi*). Place a sheet underneath the damaged foliage and then give the branch a bash with a heavy stick and you should see several of the tiny (3mm long) black beetles jumping onto the sheet (they jump a bit like fleas, hence 'flea beetle'). The beetles make the holes by boring into buds and feeding on the developing leaves while they are still folded concertina-like. This is no doubt helped by their long snout (photo top-right) which marks flea beetles as a type of weevil.



The female lays eggs on the underside of the leaf midrib. The young grub first burrows into the midrib and then tunnels diagonally towards the edge of the leaf. It later excavates the sides of the tunnel and creates a distinctive brown blotch (photo bottom-right), all the while living entirely inside the leaf. In mid-summer the next-generation adults emerge from the leaf and hibernate in crevices in bark or leaf litter until next spring.

The Beech Leaf Miner is common throughout Europe but does little harm, other than spoiling the appearance of ornamental Beech trees and hedges. However, it has become a serious pest in North America, killing many trees after its first discovery there in 2012 on American Beech. It is spreading fast with populations expanding rapidly in the absence of the parasites that control them in their native Europe.



CL

CVDCC

THE NEXT MEETING and AGM of the Community Council is Tuesday, June 10th, 7.30-9.00pm. All welcome. To comment or attend (by Zoom) contact: cvdcc.sec@gmail.com. After that meetings will recommence from the 2nd Tuesday in September and monthly thereafter to December. Any permanent residents are very welcome.

Grants Paid

BETWEEN: 01/7 & 12/5/25

8 Student Bursaries	£4,000
22 Young Person's	£5,501
23 Energy Efficiency	£41,145
16 Get the Valley Growing	£5,458
3 E Bikes	£1,499
21 Warm Up / Costs Down	£3,699
5 Community Groups	£2,331
69 TOTAL	£63,633

Recipe of the Month

SUMMER LIMONCELLO TRIFLE

- 3 oranges
- 75ml limoncello
- 100g sponge fingers
- 250g mascarpone
- 2 heaped tablespoons icing sugar
- 100ml semi-skimmed milk
- 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Some strawberries or other berries
- 10g of grated dark chocolate



Squeeze juice from the oranges into an appropriately sized serving dish.

Stir in the limoncello and taste to check the level of sweetness.

Cover the base of the dish with the sponge fingers. Put the mascarpone and icing sugar into a separate bowl with the milk. Finely grate over the zest of the lemon, then squeeze in the juice from one half. Add the vanilla extract to the bowl and whisk well.

Spread this mixture over the sponge fingers, then scatter over the grated chocolate (adding berries if desired).

Place in the fridge for at least 2 hours.....enjoy!

KS

Contact Us

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VRG admin and information:
admin@valleyrenewables.co.uk
07765 295 282

Visit us on the web at:
www.valleyrenewables.co.uk
or Carron Valley Connections
private Facebook group

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Remember - Flower & Produce Show & BBQ - 9th August