

Carron Valley & District

Carron Valley & District Newsletter

Issue 44, Oct'25

Members - Date for Your Diaries

4TH NOVEMBER, 8PM, AT THE HALL

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Valley Renewables Group, the Community Development Trust, will be held at the above date, time, place. This is our annual opportunity to hear about what's been going on, and to consider the annual accounts. But not only that, it is a chance to exchange ideas as a membership, get direct feedback and to look forward with new ideas. For the first time we will not be getting chased out by a caretaker at 9.30 but be able to just chat over light refreshments.

This is a members only event and attendees should be ready to have their names ticked off on a list. Look forward to the annual catch up.

Official Opening of the New Hall

25TH October, Outside the Hall

11.00 THE HALL WILL BE opened by Fin Becks-Phelps, Head of Business Development in the UK for Nadara, the largest windfarm operator in our area. After the ribbon cutting, there will be light refreshments in the hall for invited guests.

A small group of VRG residents has worked tirelessly through funding, red tape and organisation to make our new Community hall potentially a great asset to the area, where, until now, we have had no meeting space, no hall, no school, no church, no shop, and no pub. The hall will be available for use by Community groups, for events and non-community use. To book a slot go to: www.carronvalleyhall.org.uk.

Pomona Apple Day & BBQ

25TH October at the Community Event Space

12.00 BBQ, SOCIALISING AND APPLE BASHING

IT SEEMS LIKE THERE might be a bumper crop of apples this year, so at 12noon we will start crushing and juicing apples, and pears if you have any. Please bring any fruit you want to juice, and clean bottles to take the product home in. If you want to freeze or ferment your juice, make sure to sterilise the bottles.

We are very fortunate that Lynsey Payne, our apple expert, will be around from 12 to 2pm to help with identifying any apples and offering advice on choosing and caring for trees.

There will also be children's activities to keep all happy.

There will be our usual excellent barbecue provided by Jennifer Wilgerod and her team. I have heard mention of pulled pork burgers and lots of vegetarian options, as well as the usual irresistible sweet treats (no fighting over the Bakewell tarts, please).

We look forward to seeing everyone.



In This Issue

- > Diary Date
- > Official Opening
- > Apple Day & BBQ
- > Woodland Events
- > WPALC
- > CPR
- > Your Chance
- > F&P Show Report
- > Trainee Trustee
- > Get Growing Scot.
- > The Hall
- > Fair Trade
- > Retrofit Service
- > Urgent Update
- > Wasp of Month
- > Local Place Plan
- > Gardeners Beware
- > Seasonal Recipe
- > Meetings
- > Roe Deer Aware
- > Half Term Fun
- > Next CVDCC Mtgs
- > Grants Summary
- > Investment Fund
- > Politicians

Woodland Update

A GOOD SUMMERS' growth has ensured that the walk around the pond looks and sounds like a pleasant woodland walk for everyone who has been. It's amazing to think what a difference a few years has made.



There have been 2 wood fuel days since the last newsletter. Having the Hall now means folk can get shelter for lunch or a cuppa whenever they feel the need. About 2 dozen volunteers come along each time and help process and / or deliver wood to Community residents, whilst still having time to chat or go for a walk. 72 loads were delivered over these past 2 sessions. The final wood fuel day is Sat 8th Nov.



I know it's only October but you need to know that the Community Christmas tree day is **Sat 6th Dec.**, so put it in your diary to come along, choose and cut your own Christmas tree. DB

Woodland Events

HERE'S WHAT'S COMING UP.

Oct 25: Official Hall opening & POMONA Apple Day

Nov 8: Wood fuel plus Sitka bashing

Dec 6: Xmas Tree cutting and woodland maintenance.

Feb 14: Woodland maintenance

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

WPALC

WPALC - WHAT DOES THAT stand for I hear you as? It's West Plean & Auchenbowie Ladies Club of course. Here is its programme for the next few meetings.

Oct 30th Sri Lanka photos

Nov 20th AGM

Dec 4th Christmas gathering

2026

Jan 8th Musical afternoon

Jan 22nd TBC



Meetings are held in the Church Halls of Larbert Old Church, from 1pm -3pm, costing £2.50 a meeting for members, £3.00 for non-members, with the first meeting free.

We always end with a cup of tea and a biscuit, and lots of chat, so please come and join us, and bring a mug! HR

It Was Restart a Heart Day Recently So.....

If someone is unconscious and not breathing normally, call 999 and start CPR (resuscitation) straight away.

CPR on adults

If you have been trained in CPR, including rescue breaths, and feel confident using your skills, you should give chest compressions with rescue breaths. Or if not hands-only CPR.

Hands-only CPR

1. Kneel next to the person and place the heel of your hand on the breastbone at the centre of their chest. Place the palm of your other hand on top of the hand that's on their chest and interlock your fingers.
2. Position yourself so your shoulders are directly above your hands,
3. Using your body weight (not just your arms), press straight down by 5 to 6cm (2 to 2.5 inches) on their chest.
4. Keeping your hands on their chest, release the compression and allow their chest to return to its original position.
5. Repeat these compressions at a rate of 100 to 120 times a minute until an ambulance arrives or for as long as you can.

CPR with rescue breaths

1. Place the heel of your hand on the centre of the person's chest, then place the palm of your other hand on top and press down by 5 to 6cm (2 to 2.5 inches) at a steady rate of 100 to 120 compressions a minute.
2. After every 30 chest compressions, give 2 rescue breaths.
3. Tilt the person's head gently and lift the chin up with 2 fingers. Pinch the person's nose. Seal your mouth over their mouth and blow steadily and firmly into their mouth for about 1 second. Check that their chest rises. Give 2 rescue breaths.
4. Continue with cycles of 30 chest compressions and 2 rescue breaths until they begin to recover or emergency help arrives.

This all needs practising of course, and varying a bit especially with children. So when the first CPR & Defib session takes place in the Hall, try to be there. Incidentally, do you know where your nearest defibrillator is? Check here:

<https://www.valleyrenewables.co.uk/defibrillators>

Now's Your Chance

CVDCC

WITH THE DEPARTURE of Maureen Berry from the area, there is now a vacancy on the Community Council. This is an important, but not hugely onerous role. Put simply, the Community Council acts as a link between the Community and the Local Authority, and tries to ensure the local best interests are served. There must be 6 Community Councillors, no more no less. So, if you are keen to watch out for the Community and keep an eye on Local Authority issues, you will find this interesting.

There are 9 meetings a year, some face-to-face at the Hall, the rest by Zoom. Qualifications are minimal: - you need to be on the Carron Valley & District voters' role, and fill in a form which you can get from the secretary at cvdcc.sec@gmail.com.

Another chance to play your part in the affairs of the Community, perhaps in a more creative way, is to become a trustee / director of the Valley Renewables Group. Its main function is to distribute windfarm funding for the benefit of the Community in as many creative ways as possible within the rules. Trustees can bring whatever skills they have to the table in the knowledge that they will be used and they will be welcome. There is a maximum of 9 members on the Board. So, if you would like to take a turn at working with others for the benefit of the Community, or perhaps you don't always agree with how things are done locally and have some ideas that might work better, now's the time to come forward and give it a go.



Board meetings are being reduced to 6 per year (from the current 12), and will be mostly face-to-face at the Hall. Qualifications are: - to be a member of the VRG and to fill in a form which can be got from admin@valleyrenewables.co.uk or online.

Flower & Produce Show Report

ON AUGUST 9TH THERE WAS a rumble in the Valley, the social and horticultural event of the year was underway. Cake tins were burnished, jam pans boiled and secateurs sharpened. Last year, 2024, our first attempt, was so good we had to do it again and this year it was even bigger.

There were around fifty classes with multiple entries for many of them. If you wanted to be smart and learn from experience, you could check out which classes had lots of entries (cucumbers) and which had rather fewer, and enter strategically those where you might meet the least competition.



The barbecue by Jenny Wilgerod, was as usual, a feast and a delight. Meanwhile, music played and friends old and new talked and laughed. We had a very welcome presence of the Community police and local forest ranger.

We were very grateful for support from Kippen Flower Show who were able to supply us with handy labels which kept the exhibitor's name hidden until the judging was over. They came to share the day and were amazed at the quality of the exhibits, the warm atmosphere (despite furious gusts of wind), and particularly

liked the donations to Strathcarron Hospice from those who took home any left-over goodies at the end of the afternoon. We sent £175 to our near and valued neighbours.

We also had expert support of our judges who have to come from outside the boundaries to ensure that all is fair.



What does the Flower and Produce show achieve? Firstly, it one of few opportunities for our scattered Community to get together, and secondly the competition spurs on even better efforts in the garden and kitchen.

I think we have found a winning formula.



CP

Young Person's Opportunity

IF YOU ARE 18 YEARS old or more, and you would like the chance to become a Trainee Trustee / Director, get in touch with admin@valleyrenewables.co.uk and mention you are interested. You will be able to sit in on VRG Board meetings every 2 months, take part in the discussions, and take advantage of free training sessions. After an initial period of familiarisation and training, you will be able to become a fully fledged board member as soon as there are any vacancies. This is a great opportunity to cut your teeth on this level of decision making, and to speak up for the younger members of the Community. It will look great on you CV when it comes to future employment.

Get Growing Scotland

COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING is fast becoming a vital tool in building local resilience. Hundreds of community food initiatives can be found across Scotland, from containers outside community centres to shared allotments, community gardens, farms and orchards.

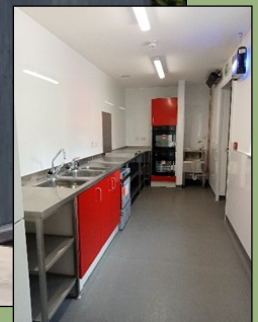
Growing food together is about much more than fresh local food, it's about empowering people, restoring nature, and strengthening the social fabric of our communities from the ground up. Everyone can take part, and EVERY community can benefit, and we can help to make that happen. Get Growing Scotland's free advisory service, with support from the National Lottery, supports individuals, groups and partner organisations to develop ideas, access land, and grow and realise their vision. So, whether you read this in a personal or professional capacity, **look out your window** and if, for a moment, you are curious, you can read more here <https://getgrowingscotland.org/about/>. Sign up for our quarterly newsletter [www.https://getgrowingscotland.org/about/](https://getgrowingscotland.org/about/), and contact us.

Community Hall - Ah! The Light

BEFORE YOU SAY IT, the car park floodlight is a bit dominant. It's not what we intended, but what we got. We plan to change it to something more 'on demand' rather than on whenever it's dark. Please be patient, it'll get sorted.

Well anyway, the Community now has its own meeting place. So, all those events that we previously said we could have 'if only we had somewhere to have them', can now take place. Let's get organising. You'll find the Booking System on its own wee website - <https://carronvalleyhall.org.uk>. Residents get a preferential rate and others will find the charges very sensible.

We'd like to take this opportunities to thank the main funder, Nadara, and also CSET (Clackmannan & Stirling Environment Trust), without whose help this wouldn't have happened. Also many thanks to all the residents who donated kitchen equipment and of course their time. Just brilliant.



Fair Trade

JUST WHILE WE ARE ON THE subject of the Hall, we'd really like it if any if any consumables could be Fair Trade as far as possible. That means that ethical, equitable and sustainable practices have been involved in creating them. Also if we can reduce the food miles involved and support local businesses that would be great.



RETROFIT ADVISORY SERVICE - Oct'25

WE HAVE PROVIDED AN advisory service for those residents who have had an EPC+ survey done. We carried out surveys on 63 houses, so all of these will be eligible for an advisory visit at no cost to the householder. We have initially targeted those households with low ratings of E and F. So far we have delivered 19 advisory visits with several more in the pipeline. The uptake has been surprisingly slow, so we are hoping for improvements when we move to the higher EPC ratings to offer the advisory service.

Some examples of residents experiences follow.

JS



EXAMPLE 1:

FOR 15 YEARS WE HAVE been working away at energy efficiency improvements to our home. We've progressively done all the basics - double glazing, draught stripping, loft insulation, some external wall insulation, solar PV, and biomass heating. However, there were some remaining issues where sound technical advice was required. These, and many more, were answered by Shirley and Ronan on their Advisory visit.

Firstly:

We have cold spots below and around window openings where the stone walls are thinner and the inner lining is timber panelled. The advice is to strip the panelling and apply aerogel insulation, before refitting the panelling. Aerogel is a very high performance insulation material (US space technology, so not cheap) but only 5 mm or 10mm thick - ideal for going behind timber panelling or other wall finishes. We have three windows that need the treatment and we'll tackle them one at a time.

Secondly:

We'd like to look at better time and temperature controls for our heating. We have a programmer and were considering room thermostats. The advice is to replace some or all of our thermostatic radiator valves with WiFi controlled valves, where we can set the time and temperature, and do this remotely if required. This will allow us to zone the heating in the house. They are about £50 each and do not require professional fitting.

Thirdly:

We reviewed the costs and benefits of battery storage from our Solar PV. We currently loose about 4,250kwh a year of unused electricity to the grid, which might seem a lot, but then battery storage is not cheap and batteries have only 8- 10 years life expectancy. The economic advice is to hold off battery storage until our Feed in Tariff deal ends and we need to use all the electricity we generate.

All great advice. Well worth getting Shirley and Ronan along. This sort of simple, effective, up-to-date technical advice is just what we needed. We would thoroughly recommend it to everyone in our Community.

EXAMPLE 2:

I live in a house built in 1903 which has many sash windows and draughty doors. The house has a cavity wall but this has not been insulated. We have high ceilings and a large loft space. Over the years I have gradually fitted draught excluders and insulated the loft with about 300mm of hemp ,and also upgraded our oil boiler for one which is much more efficient. We also have thermostatic valves on all the radiators and thermally lined curtains. Our energy bills are high and we use our boiler for central heating, supplemented by open fires using coal and wood.

No surprise to learn that our EPC rating is an "E".

I welcomed the Advisory Team of Shirley and Ronan to see if they could help me identify those measures which would reduce my energy usage and which I could afford. We went through the EPC report in detail and they arrived at 3 recommendations which I would be able to implement, with some grant support.

The first was to fit secondary glazing in the room where we spend most time.

The second was to lower a ceiling next to my loft, which has a skylight above which must leak a lot of heat.

Thirdly, I should check the cavity wall spacing to see if it's suitable for insulation and ensure there are no signs of damp on any of the internal walls.

In hindsight these were all obvious and sensible recommendations. I found their visit very helpful and useful and they certainly helped me to prioritise my energy efficiency improvements.

CVDCC Urgent Update

SADLY ONCE MORE there is a vacancy in the Community Council. This outcome means that, at the time of writing, the CC is in need of a new recruit. Please consider putting your name forward, come to our next meeting in the Community Hall on Nov 11th at 7.30, or in the meantime contact our secretary Dorothy, using the email ccdcc.sec@gmail.com. PH

It is essential that the CC has 6 Community representatives to uphold the interests of residents. One less than that and it won't be allowed to function by Stirling Council. This would be a real shame in view of all the excellent work it has been doing, plus the fact it forms such an important link in management of windfarm community benefit funding coming into the area. So please consider giving it a try even if just for a year.

Local Place Plan

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL HAS recently completed a Local Place Plan for Carron Valley. This is a document designed to assist Stirling Council's future planning by outlining the priorities of residents.

Residents across the Carron Valley and District have contributed to the plan in their responses to interviews, surveys, etc. Once approved the Local Place Plan will be available on the VRG web page.

It comes as no surprise that one of the major themes from all responses was the beauty of the area and a desire to keep it so.

Gardeners Beware

MONKSHOOD (ACONITUM NAPELLIS) is a tall handsome hardy perennial plant, growing to a height of 3-4 feet, with large deeply divided palmate leaves. It has dark purplish / blue flowers, which are narrow / oblong and helmet shaped, hence its most common names Monkshood, as it resembles a monk's cowl. It is insect pollinated, commonly bees.

BEWARE! All parts of this plant are extremely poisonous both by ingestion or mere contact, so it should be treated with extreme caution. It is possibly the most poisonous plant found in the UK, and is thought to have been introduced to the UK by Cistercian monks at Roche Abbey, Yorkshire in the 12th century

Another of its colloquial names is Wolfbane, possibly due to arrows being tipped with the plants juices and then used to kill wolves in Medieval Europe.

The chief toxin is a potent neurotoxin. Poisoning may occur by simply picking the leaves without gloves, as the toxin is easily absorbed through the skin. Tingling starts, which will extend up the arm to the shoulder, and thereafter the heart will be affected, finally resulting in multi organ failure and death.



Surprisingly, given all of this, Monkshood can be found in gardens as an interesting herbaceous species, and even used as fresh cutting material for florists or dried.

There are white and rose coloured forms in cultivation, with the cultivar Spark's Variety winning an RHS Gold Award. I hope it didn't kill anyone! HR

Wasp of the Month



THIS HAS BEEN A VERY good year for galls on oak leaves. Look on the underside of the leaves and you may find strange button-like discs, just 2-5 mm across. These are galls. The commonest species is the Common Spangle Gall but my favourite is the Silk Button Gall.

So what is a gall? It is an abnormal growth of plant tissue caused, in this case, by a miniscule wasp called *Neuroterus numismalis*. The wasp egg is laid in the leaf and the developing grub then takes total control by reprogramming the leaf cells to build it a protective home instead of normal leaf tissue. The circular disc so formed, about 2mm across and 1mm deep with radiating silky golden hairs, looks like those silk buttons made by wrapping silk or wool round a small ring (try googling 'Dorset Birdseye Button').

Different wasp species produce different subtle blends of chemicals tricking the oak into creating their own unique galls; thus Common Spangle Galls are yellowish-green discs covered in red hairs, quite unlike silk buttons. The tree is even conned into producing a new network of leaf veins to deliver food to the developing wasp.

Come late autumn, the galls fall off, so get out there and look soon or you will miss them, and the wasp continues life in the leaf litter. But the wasp has even ensured that the oak tree has coated the gall with a bark-like skin to protect it through the winter until the adult wasp emerges next spring. Absolutely, totally, amazing! CL



Q: Where will you be on **Saturday afternoon, 25th Oct**?
A: At the **Apple Day** of course!

Seasonal Recipe

CHEATS APPLE CRUMBLE

Ingredients serves 4

- 4 medium size apples
- 1 .5 oz caster sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 100 ml water (or just enough to cover the chopped apples)
- 3 crushed digestive biscuits
- Vanilla ice cream

Peel, core and chop the apples into quarters, place in a pot and just cover with water. Bring to the boil and simmer until apples are reduced to a saucy / mushy texture. Take off the heat and stir in the sugar to taste depending on the variety of apples, and the cinnamon. Leave to cool. I usually pop this mixture in a container in the fridge and keep it as a stand by.

Put 2 scoops of ice cream in 4 dishes, pour 1/4 of the apples over each serving and top with the crushed biscuits.



Meeting Frequency Change

AFTER THE AGM on Nov 4th, Valley Renewables Group meetings will take place every 2 months instead of every month. So that will be the first Tuesday of December, February, April, June, August, and September. The intention is to free up some time for the trustee / directors to carry out agreed actions and for sub-groups to meet and make plans.

Of course, perhaps that means being part of the Board just became more appealing. So if you have been itching to get involved, or would like to give it a go, now's the time. Chat it over with one of the Board. Applications are open to VRG members.

Roe Deer Road Safety

HAVING BEEN INVOLVED in two car accidents involving deer, can I remind drivers that autumn is a high risk time for deer encounters. You are most likely to meet them at dawn and from dusk to midnight. Deer tend not to travel alone so expect more to follow the one you can see.

In Scotland over 8,000 deer related accidents take place per year, but this is thought to be a gross underestimate as many are not reported. As the deer population is increasing, encounters are more likely and obviously the faster you go the less reaction time you have. Whilst it is not a legal requirement to report an accident, if the deer is injured and near the road, you should report it to the police for both safety and animal welfare concerns. Take care out there. They may look cute but lives have been lost in the accidents they cause. PH



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

Half Term Fun

CVDCC

All welcome 19.30-20.30 at the Community Hall. Meetings are monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of the month up to December and then from February to June. Any permanent residents are very welcome. To comment or attend contact:

cvdcc.sec@gmail.com.

Grants Paid

BETWEEN: 1st Aug. & 14th Oct.

Student Bursaries (8)	£4,000
Young Person's Grants (13)	£2,086
Energy Efficiency (13)	£24,928
Warm Up / Costs Down (5)	£984
Get the Valley Growing (5)	£2,448
E-Bikes (5)	£2,500
Community Groups (1)	£500
TOTAL (50)	£37,446

Contact Us

VRG Secretary:
secy@valleyrenewables.co.uk

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

Community Council Secretary:
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Editor:
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October Half-Term Nature Survival Trail

Think you could survive the changing seasons like Scotland's wildlife?

Join our reservoir rangers for a fun, hands-on survival challenge trail.

Friday 24th October 10-12
Carron Valley Reservoir, Stirling

Learn

How animals and plants prepare for winter



Create

Get creative with natural materials



Explore

Build shelters, track food and discover the reservoir area

Family friendly event most suited to under 12s. **Under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.**



Free Event. Booking essential- to sign up, and for more information, search for **Scottish Water and FLS Partnership Ranger Service** on Eventbrite or scan the QR code



Investment Fund



OUR FUND SITS AT £55,729 after drawings for the Community Hall project. The annual income now is £1,502 with fund performance up by 9.08% over 12 months.

The fund has done its job in saving and growing the funds for our major capital project, the new Community Hall.

As the income from the residual amount now in the fund will not cover the management fees, it is proposed we move the remaining funds into a one year fixed-term charities savings account earning interest at 4%. If needed, we can renew this at each year end.

As time passes, and funds begin to accumulate again as previously, opening another investment fund will be considered. In the period that we have had the fund, it raised around £84k; much better than a bank would do.

Remember - Pomona Apple Day & BBQ - 25th October