

Carron Valley & District



Carron Valley & District Newsletter

Issue 46, April'26

Looking Forward

SO IS THAT THE SNOW finally gone do you think? Spring has come, the grass is ris', and all that. With it now being $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the Valley Renewables' financial year (ends 30th June), the VRG Board is brain-storming over what should be the priorities going forward. So now's a good time to put in **your** penny worth. We are always listening out for new ideas – a new grant scheme, new project.....etc. Please get in touch.



With current worldwide events affecting many aspects of our lives, you may be finding it difficult to plan ahead with any degree of certainty. A key variable is the cost of oil and gas which affects almost everything else. If this is proving to be a real problem to you, have a look at p7 and see if there are any possible solutions within the Scottish Government's Home Heating Advice scheme. However, if you find that no schemes seem to fit and you are experiencing real hardship, please let us know. We will find a way of helping out. Also if you notice that a neighbour seems to be struggling to cope, alert us and we will do our best.

You may think that the Community has a lot of funds, and so why doesn't it just hand that out in cash. Sadly that is not within our power. However, we do have the Energy Efficiency Scheme which enables you to reduce the cost of heating your house, and the Wood Fuel Scheme that provides free logs 6 times a year; that's worth around £400-£500 to you.

Valley Vitality

FREE HEALTH & WELL-BEING GROUP

SPRING'S HERE - the perfect moment to shake off winter blues and take time out for YOU.

A new group is running in the Hall; full of friendly faces with everyone welcome to come along, to recharge and feel brighter.

Pop in on Wednesdays, 12–2pm from April 15th to May 20th (sessions run for 6 weeks).

Enjoy a relaxed couple of hours, a cuppa and homemade soup, a chat, or just a quiet sit. No pressure - No expectations.

Each week there'll be simple, useful ideas like sleeping tips, gentle mindfulness and uplifting ways to feel a bit better.

Why not bring a pal or a family member. All welcome.

Just drop in, no need to book although for soup numbers it would help! Taxis can be arranged for those without transport. Christine and Josie will have the kettle on.

07555 052700; jo_cdeans@hotmail.com



Don't Forget

Flower & Produce Show & BBQ - Sat. 15th Aug at the Event Space & Hall

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Woodland News

14TH MARCH WAS the first wood fuel day of the year. A great turn out of helpers got 36 loads away in time for most to get home for the rugby.

The next one is 9th May so mark it in your diary to come along and enjoy the fun.

Felling permission has been received. Over the spring/autumn the windblow from recent storm damage and the adjacent vulnerable block will be taken down. Some will be sold to cover the cost of the work and some to replenish the wood supply for wood fuel days. Replanting will take place over the autumn / winter. Some will be Sitka but there will be a lot of native trees.

Woodfuel 2025

OVER 6 COMMUNITY WOOD FUEL DAYS in 2025, an amazing **212 loads** of logs or lengths were collected or distributed around the Community free of charge. In these times of increasing fuel costs, this can make a huge difference.

A really big **THANK YOU** to the amazing volunteers who gave their time to help processing and to deliver logs to residents who couldn't come to collect. Over the 6 sessions a total of **118 volunteer days** were recorded which made it all happen.

The Community Hall has been really welcome for shelter and a warm up and for refreshments. Very many thanks to all those who pop along with a big pot of hot soup and bread, or sandwiches. These days can involve a lot of Community effort, but volunteers turn out time and again to help make each day run smoothly. Many thanks everyone. DB



Getting Fit Can Be Fun

I'VE ABSOLUTELY LOVED running the Thursday fitness sessions at Carron Valley Hall (ongoing weekly 1pm-2pm, £9pp) and building a great little fitness community there. With the weather getting better and the nights getting lighter, it's been such a nice time to get outdoors and stay active together.

I'd love to see the community continue to grow and bring more people together. Even if the class times don't quite suit, if anyone wants to chat about fitness or health, feel free to drop me a message.

We also offer online coaching and classes in other areas, but a big focus for me is helping promote and build fitness within the Carron Valley: - communityfitness25@hotmail.com. JC

Woodland Events

WOODLAND EVENTS THIS YEAR: -

- 11th April: Woodland Maintenance and Easter activities for youngsters.
- 9th May: Wood fuel Processing
- 13th June: Wood fuel Processing
- 12th Sept: Wood fuel Processing
- 10th Oct: Wood fuel Processing
- 14th Nov: Wood fuel Processing
- 12th Dec: Woodland Maintenance & cut your own Christmas tree

This is a hefty schedule needing lots of volunteers. It's all non-technical stuff. So come along and join in. Wear chunky footwear, warm clothes, robust gloves, and bring waterproofs.

Please remember that those helping to operate the log processor and in the immediate area must wear a safety helmet, high-viz vest (provided), and wear safety boots.

Apple Pruning Day

A DRY BUT CHILLY DAY welcomed some hardy souls to learn about pruning apple (and other fruit) trees. Lynsey Payne of Appletreeman was our friendly tutor who happily shared her knowledge and love of fruit trees.



Apple trees ranging from 2 years to 150+ years old provided the full range of methods necessary and potential problems.

We all came away enthused and confident to help get our own fruit trees back into more productive shape. Learning is such great fun! <https://plantsandapples.com> DB

WPALC

WEST PLEAN & AUCHENBOWIE
LADIES CLUB



Here is its programme for the next few meetings.

2026

Apr 16 Bruce Keith - Bridges

30 Stained Glass in and around Falkirk

May 14 Helping Hands donation

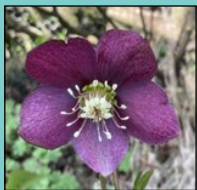
May 28 Afternoon tea

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

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

Spring Colour

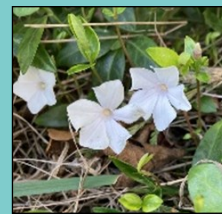
WITH THE SNOWDROPS OVER and the daffodils in full glory, I wondered what other colours I could find in our hardly awake garden - I was pleasantly surprised:



Firstly: the glorious **Hellebore**: a very promiscuous plant that cross pollinates easily with neighbouring plants, leading to a wide variety of mixed colours and patterns in their offspring. Often called Christmas Roses, they are known for blooming in the cold of winter representing hope, new beginnings and tenacity. They come in various colours, and every part of the plant is toxic!



Next the **Periwinkle** (*Vinca minor*) which is a hardy, trailing evergreen perennial, providing low maintenance ground cover, and is very tolerant of deep shade. We have both white and powder blue varieties.



Finally, the **Cowslip** (*Primula veris*) close relative of the Primrose (*P. vulgaris*) and not to be confused with the larger, rarer Oxslip (*P. elatior*). Cowslips have always been scarce in Scotland but with old pastures being ploughed it is becoming even more scarce. Cowslip wine was once recommended as a cure for insomnia, and as an ointment to remove spots and wrinkles!

Before you know it, there will be swathes of Bluebells in the woods, banks of Primroses, Irises and Forget-me-not, and summer will be well and truly on its way.

HR

Community Council Chat

DESPITE ALL THE CURRENT PROBLEMS in the world, spring still appears to be springing. Lighter nights have made the journey to the Community Hall a time to appreciate the fabulous scenery we live in.

Community Council meetings will now take place in the Hall on the second Tuesday of the month until December with a summer break and, as we have mentioned before. All residents are very welcome to attend.

The Hall recently hosted a public consultation on the new Cairnoch Hill Wind Farm. I hope as many of you as possible attended as this would be a significant development in the Valley and deserves close attention. The Developers are also attending the meeting on 14th April from 7.30-8pm, to which those with unanswered questions are also welcome.

The Community Council was recently involved in discussions with Chris Kane MP on the Government's grant scheme to help pay the increased cost of Heating Oil and LPG. We were impressed with his commitment to solving some of the problems of rural living.

The Community Council would welcome anyone willing to join it, particularly now as some would like to retire this year. Having an active Community Council is crucial to the area in ensuring community benefit funding is well spent, in helping to keep an eye on local authority issues, and in providing a place to make your views known. Six good folk and true are required in total. We're an easy going set. A hour or so a month, with a 3 month summer break. So how about it?

Hopefully a sunny summer awaits.

PH

Holyrood Elections

WITH THE SCOTTISH Government elections coming up on Thurs 7th May, if you would like a postal vote and haven't had one before, you need to send in your application for one at least 11 working days before the election. You will find out all the information and a form at: -

[Application to vote by post in Scotland](#)

If you voted by post last time, make sure you have received your postal vote by Fri 24th April. If you've not received it by then contact: - 01785 233068.

Thinking of Booking



IF YOU ARE ORGANISING an event or a party, and are thinking to perhaps have

it in the new Community Hall, which would be a great place by the way, you'd be best to check out the Booking Calendar for availability first. You'll find that at: -

[Booking – Carron Valley Community Hall](#)

I Dig Trees Update

YOU MAY RECALL we came across The Conservation Volunteers I Dig Trees programme a few years ago and applied for a number of trees to plant in the Community Woodland. We were successful in our bid and received a delivery of 150 young tree saplings and 50 hawthorn hedge saplings in our first year, then 750 saplings last year, followed by 950 this year.

These were duly planted in the Community Woodlands over the winter months by our woodland volunteer group. The hawthorns were planted near the event space to deter wild campers and other unauthorised access. Surplus trees were offered to the Community via our FB page and we know these will benefit us all as we pass extended woodlands throughout the valley in the years ahead.

The Conservation Volunteers, via the I Dig Trees programme, have provided 5 million free trees to communities across the UK already. Their idea is simple - by planting trees, communities pro-actively help combat climate change, improve local air quality and create greener, healthier environments for people and wildlife.

All being well, we will be given the opportunity to apply for more next year, so please contact us early to let us know if you would like some and roughly how many. The trees tend to come in mixed packs of 50, all bare root, and all native woodland species. The packs are generally labelled traditional woodland, pollinator, wildlife friendly, big 5, or hawthorn hedging. Typical trees included are Rowan, Hawthorn, Crab Apple, Goat Willow, Blackthorn, Beech, Birch, Alder, Hazel, Oak, Hornbeam, Elder, Wild Cherry, Dog Wood and Dog Rose.

Our Community Woodland is run totally by volunteers within the area, and volunteering is great for getting to know and meet likeminded neighbours, and also benefits mental health. There is often soup and savouries in our newly opened Community Hall. Enjoying the bracing air of the Valley, and the views are worth turning up for too.

We would love to see you on one of our woodland volunteer days. Please look out for dates in the Community newsletter and on the Carron Valley Community Woodland Face Book page.

B&JY

Lemony Prawn Stir Fry

INGREDIENTS:

- Pack of large prawns - 150gms (or Quorn or mushrooms)
- 1 pack of soft noodles (usually come 2 in a pack..save one)
- Tin of sweetcorn
- Shredded white cabbage - 100gms
- ½ Onion chopped
- Clove of garlic or lazy garlic
- Fresh lemon
- Fresh chives
- Stir fry oil - 5 glugs
- Wok Sesame oil - 1 glug
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Boiled water - ½ cup
- Light Soy sauce

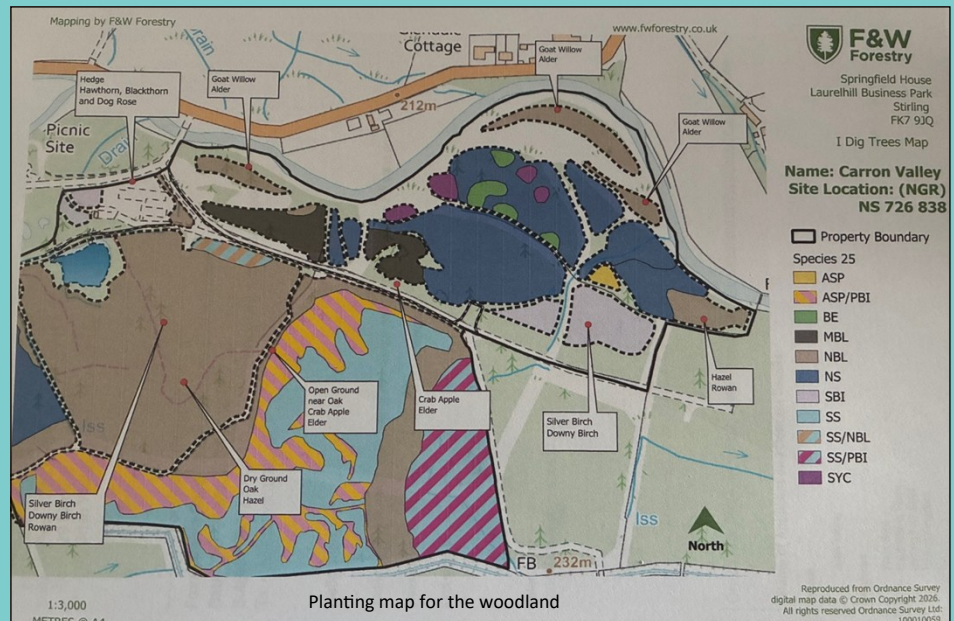
METHOD:

When the pan is hot with the 2 oils combined, add the cabbage and onion; stir fry for 2 to 3 minutes until both become soft. Then add tinned sweetcorn (lightly drained) followed by the zest and juice of the lemon. Keep stirring! Add prawns and some warm water. Next add the garlic, chopped chives, and salt and pepper (to taste).

Create a well in the middle of the pan/wok, add the noodles and additional water if required. Remember the noodles are already cooked so this is just to heat/break them up.

Now stir everything together and cook on a medium heat for a minute or so. This serves 2 people. Add light soy sauce to taste for extra flavour.

If you don't want to use prawns, then sliced mushrooms or Quorn chunks could be swapped in.



Grants Amendments

JUST A COUPLE OF UPDATES TO THE SYSTEM TO NOTE:

- ◆ Into the Energy Efficiency grant application will be added the following: - 'Do you have an up-to-date Energy Performance Certificate for the property for which you are applying? If YES, what is your current rating? This question is not compulsory. Failing to complete this will not bar you from receiving a grant, but answering it will assist us in providing you with a speedier response, plus help our commitment to best governance and accountability for spending Community funds. All grant awards are subject to funds remaining available and applications meeting the required criteria.'

- ◆ Children and Young Persons' grants – revised guidance: -

'NB. You can have a grant for tuition again. i.e. If you have had a grant for £250 towards dance lessons one year **you can** have another grant for dance lessons the next year. However, the amount requested should just cover costs incurred during the VRG financial year which runs July to June. For example, if you apply in January it should be just for the Spring and Summer terms. A further grant can be applied for in the new financial year for the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms up to the maximum amount of £250, i.e. up to the end of June. This is a change from the previous conditions and is to prevent grants running over into a future financial year.

Please note that grants for ongoing sessions are paid in arrears on presentation of receipts, not upfront. Please submit batches of receipts, e.g. termly, to save paperwork. Proof of progress may be requested, e.g. certificates or letter of development or progress.'

Snail of the Month - Brown Lipped Snail

SNAILS ARE NOT POPULAR animals (their reputation only partly rescued by Brian the Snail). But the Brown-lipped Snail (*Cepaea nemoralis*) does little damage to healthy garden plants, preferring to feed on dead and decaying plant material, so we can enjoy the fascinating range of shell colours and patterns.

The 'typical' form (photo 3) has a yellow shell with five brown bands and a brown 'lip' which distinguishes it from the very similar White-lipped Snail.

But the shell colour may be yellow (photos 1-5) or

pink/brown (6-10) and the bands may be quite pale (2) or blackish.

Some (7) or all (1, 6) bands may be missing, or the five may be fused into two (4, 9) or even a single broad band (5, 10) making the snail almost black.



Here is a classic example of natural selection. Their main predator is the Song Thrush which bashes snails against a stone, or 'anvil', to access the juicy insides. The yellow and very stripy forms (1-3) can easily hide amongst grasses. In contrast, snails with darker and less stripy shells are harder for thrushes to spot against the shaded leaf litter of woodlands. This is survival of the fittest in action: those with good camouflage are less likely to end up on a thrush's anvil.

But shell colours are affected by temperature as well as camouflage. Yellow shells reflect sunlight more than darker shells, which means yellow snails won't dry out so quickly in sunny grasslands. Those with darker shells, however, can remain warm and active without drying out for longer in damp shady woodlands. Similarly, most snails in the intense sunlight of southern Europe have yellow shells to reduce desiccation, while darker shells are more common in cooler northern climates.

Snails are most active on warm, damp nights but often rest the following day on tree trunks, or perhaps you can find the shell remains around a thrush's anvil. So which forms are commonest near you? CL

Caring for YOU

CARING FOR YOU is a toolkit for adult carers. It offers practical activities and tips for dealing with specific emotions that can come about through having a caring role, as well as ideas for maintaining good overall wellbeing. It has been developed by the Carers Trust who aim to transform the lives of unpaid carers. You can download the toolkit here: -

[adult-wellbeing-toolkit-final-compressed.pdf](#)

Resources and support are also available locally at:-

[Home | Stirling Carers Centre](#)

Leek Sowing Time

NOW IS THE RIGHT time to be sowing your leek seeds in a tray of fine compost with a propagator cover to retain moisture, and located on a windowsill in the house.



Once the seedlings come through, remove the cover and keep moist. Transplant seedlings into the garden when the risk of frost has passed.

Do this now for leeks throughout the winter. RF

Energy Efficiency Group (EEG)

CASE STUDY

WE WERE FORTUNATE to be awarded an Energy Efficiency grant from the Valley Renewables Group (VRG). This, along with a grant and interest free loan over 10 years from Home Energy Scotland (HES), enabled us to have 2 Air Source Heat Pumps, an additional set of solar panels and a battery for storing electricity installed. We must admit HES were very helpful over the phone and gave us loads of great advice.

We previously had a kerosene boiler which was very thirsty and was consuming quantities of kerosene monthly. The price of kerosene practically doubled in the early months of Covid and helped push us to change to a more environmentally friendly solution. The Grants provided by the Government (HES) were the carrot, the fuel prices were the stick.

We were forecast by HES and the contractor to save a considerable sum of money on fuel costs each month and, while we had a loan to repay the cost, that was just half of our fuel saving so it was not going to burden us. The first few months were over winter, and we did not see the promised savings but, when we reflected over the whole 12 months, the forecasted saving was just about 100% accurate. It has been a very good move for us.

The only word of caution if looking at Air or Ground Source heating is that it does not offer instant heat, so you really need to keep it on all the time. However, you set the temperature to suit yourself and it is only on tick over or standby during the warmer months. The temperature raises very gradually the speed being affected by the outside air temperature.

With the UK and Scottish Governments intending to have minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings on every home in the country, now is a great time to take advantage of the free EPC survey offered by the VRG's Energy Efficiency grant. Use the VRG web site or contact the admin guru Helen admin@valleyrenewables.co.uk to arrange this.

Alternatively, for those with a current EPC, you may wish to take advantage of the free home visit by the VRG Retrofit team of Shirley Paterson (Energy Efficiency Expert) and Ronan McGirr (Architect specialising in retrofitting existing buildings), who can guide you through the minefield of EPC recommendations and provide approximate costs and future savings, as well as assisting with submitting grant applications. This is a free service; just contact Helen.

Home Energy Scotland can be contacted on 0808 808 2282 or <https://www.homeenergyscotland.org/>. Also we are happy to speak to anyone at any Community events about our experience or drop in for a chat if passing (Helen will connect you up with us).

PS. All potential buyers of homes in the UK can demand a current EPC be provided by the seller at the seller's expense. VRG provide this free of charge to all residents in the catchment area. B&JY



Music in the Valley

MARCH SAW THE FIRST of the 'Carron Valley Sessions', a series of concerts and events being held at our new community hall. The first concert was an evening with singer-songwriter Scott Ashworth. Everybody had a great time, with comments including:

"An excellent evening – we thoroughly enjoyed the music and the company."

"Fabulous, friendly and entertaining – I loved it!"

"A really nice vibe. We loved the live music."

The 10th April sees our first open session; a chance for people to come together and share a song, tune, poem or talent of their own, in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

The next event is another open session on Friday 5th June, followed by a concert by **Rain of Animals, an amazing folk and bluegrass duo, on Friday 26th June**. They are fitting in a visit to the Carron Valley in between tours of Australia and the rest of the UK, so we're incredibly lucky that they've agreed to come and play for us!



Performance by Scott Ashworth, March 2026



Rain of Animals in Concert

Friday 26th June

Thanks to generous support from the Community Grant, we have been able to make both events free to attend. Please visit www.carronvalleysessions.co.uk or scan the QR code to find out more. We look forward to welcoming you! DS



Home Heating Advice

FOLLOWING THE FACT FINDING ZOOM meeting that was held with some residents and Community Councillors by Chris Kane MP, we have received the following information on how eligible people may apply for assistance with oil / LPG costs.



The scheme aims to support households facing increased costs of oil or LPG for heating. More information will be available on our website homeheatingadvice.scot, or households can call 0800 048 7413 for assistance. Payment will be made directly to the supplier wherever possible.

Eligibility

To qualify for a payment, you must meet the following criteria:

- You are the bill payer in a home for which the primary heating fuel is oil or liquid petroleum gas (LPG).
- The home is your only or main residence.
- You have purchased fuel after 1st April 2026 or are planning to make an order shortly.
- No award has been made to the same household at the same address in the last three calendar months.

Automatic Qualification

You will qualify automatically if you receive any of the following means-tested low-income social security benefits:

- Universal Credit (including Scottish Child Payment)
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-based Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Pension Credit

Discretionary Qualification

You may also qualify through a discretionary decision if you:

- Are in financial hardship, but not currently receiving a low-income benefit, and....
- Are at risk of self-rationing, plus meet one or more of the following conditions:
- Priority need for heat or higher energy consumption due to impaired health, age (under 5 or over 75), disability, chronic or serious illness, long-term condition, mental health issue, recent hospital discharge, or end-of-life care.
- Priority need for heat due to geography or rurality.
- Other vulnerability, such as debt, waiting for a benefits decision or appeal, major life event, or recent bereavement.

Before & After

NOWADAYS, WE THINK of windfarms and new forestry as being the big landscape changers. But 90 odd years ago, it was decided to construct a reservoir at Carron Valley to supply Stirling and Falkirk, making dramatic changes to the landscape of the Valley.

Over 5 years (1935-39) the east end dammed the River Carron, whilst the west end the River Endrick. 3 miles of pipe were laid to link the main Carron Dam with the existing water main further down towards Denny. Farm steadings were moved and a new 1½ mile stretch of road made long the B818, with new housing along part of it. Opened on 14th July 1939, the reservoir cost £230,000 to build. It was 3½ miles long and 1½ miles wide, holding about 4.3 million gallons and is now the third largest in UK.



Before - looking NW between Binn Bay, Carron Bay & Smallburn
[Photo courtesy Stirling Council Archives]

Your 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

Friends of North Third



LOVE YOUR RESERVOIR

North Third Monthly Litter Picks

Join the Friends of North Third and the Scottish Water partnership ranger for a monthly reservoir shore clean up.



Wednesday 15th April
Wednesday 20th May
Wednesday 17th June

10am-12 pm

Meet at the wooden bridge, South West of the reservoir
W3W /// distanced.meatball.saints
Or NS7550199450

Litter pickers, bin bags and gloves provided. Please wear suitable warm/waterproof clothing and sturdy footwear.

To sign up and for more information **scan the QR code** or **search for Scottish Water and FLS Partnership Ranger Service on Eventbrite**



SW Internal General




working together with

CVDCC Mtgs

ANY PERMANENT RESIDENTS are very welcome 19.30-20.30. Meetings are monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from February to June and September to December. February and December meetings are by Zoom, the others in the Hall. To comment or attend contact: - cvdcc.sec@gmail.com.

Don't keep quiet about a Stirling Council issue if we can apply pressure to help sort it.

Grants Paid

JULY 1/7/25 TO 1/4/26

10 Student Bursaries	5,000
19 Young Person's	3,766
21 Energy Efficiency	34,927
18 Warm Up / Costs Down	3,486
14 Get The Valley Growing	5,243
5 E Bikes	2,500
9 Community Groups	4,211
96 Total	£59,113

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:
cvdcc.sec@gmail.com

Editor:
weehowlands@gmail.com

Posting v Emails

POSTAGE IS NOW very expensive (Standard 1st - £1.86, 2nd - 91p; Large 1st - £3.30, 2nd - £1.55). The Community Council and the VRG would like to communicate with residents via email where possible. If you are a VRG member and have been receiving email correspondence, we already have your details and no action is required. However, if other residents could please help out by sending an email to: - admin@valleyrenewables.co.uk with your name and address, then your email will be added to the list. The address is to check that you reside in the CC area. You can be assured that we would only use your email for correspondence about Community matters and that it will not be made available to third parties. We know it's nice to receive a physical paper copy of things but you could be saving us a small fortune that could, for example, be spent on more grants for Youngsters. Thanks for your help. It is much appreciated.



Valley Vitality sessions - Weds at the Hall, 12 to 2pm - 15th April to 20th May