

## 5.0 Consultation

5.1 In total, some 40 meetings were undertaken and about the same number of telephone interviews and enquiries. Given the short duration of the study, the cooperation and willingness of those contacted to set aside valuable time, is much appreciated. Perhaps it reflects the nature and wide appeal of the project and there is no doubting the high level of support and enthusiasm for establishing a route around the loch, including a safe route to the station, which would be part of it.

5.1.1 A complete list of all those interviewed and consulted can be found in Appendix 6. A listing and brief comment on the main issues raised follows:-

- Access – Top of the agenda for all landowners. Views ranged from complete opposition to the level of existing access, to those welcoming greater access and wondering how best they might take advantage of it. All recognised that the new Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, is likely to lead to greater numbers of the public walking, without hindrance, along paths and tracks or across fields. Access to the Collegiate Church is an issue requiring speedy resolution.
- Safety – The footpaths along and the safe crossing of the A760 were of almost universal concern. Junctions at the Station and along Lochlip Road at Church Street and St Winnoch Road were also highlighted. Adequate lighting of any new path along the A760 was also a concern.
- Parking – An anticipated shortage of parking at the station, RSPB and Castle Semple Centre was recognised as an issue by most consultees.
- Flooding – An issue at the eastern end of the loch in particular. The feeling is that the Elliston Weir is not as effective as it might be in controlling Castle Semple Loch water levels. The possibility of flooding is recognised as an issue for new footpath construction and the location and span of new bridges. Concern was expressed that footpath works should not prejudice any proposals the Three Lochs Project may put forward.
- Footpath Construction – Construction techniques over marshy areas was of interest and concern from both an engineering and nature conservation point of view. Whilst it was recognised that new footpaths are needed, the area is an SSSI, and routing and construction techniques need to be sensitively handled. The type of surfacing, path widths and resulting usage are real issues for the RSPB in particular.
- Footpath Usage – All consultees expressed views on this issue. Path width, surfacing, gates, barriers, and gradients are the physical determining factors in path use, and some measure of management control can be exercised by varying them. Sustrans already have an issue on the cycle path with horses, and consultees were concerned about mixing horses,

wheelchairs, bicycles, prams and children on the same path. Sustrans have negotiated a code of conduct with the British Horse Society (BHS) in an attempt to address this issue. There was common agreement that horses would not be welcome on the south side of the loch. Cyclists could go all round but they would be encouraged to dismount through the RSPB reserve area using a mixture of ranger contact, signage and leaflets indicating preferred path users.

- Environmental Impact – A general concern expressed about construction and disturbances to plants and wildlife. The level of care required in detailed routing of the paths and construction techniques will need to be high. Agreement was reached with SNH about their areas of concern and the need for specialised surveys. RSPB raised the issue of agreeing and preparing a Castle Semple Loch zoning plan for water based activities, which would be aimed at reducing disturbance to birds at the western end of the Loch.
- Cultural Heritage – There was interest and enthusiasm from all concerned at the vast amount of fascinating family histories related to the Peel Tower, Castle Semple, Barr Castle and the area as a whole. There is a wealth of information and details of the amazing engineering, drainage, landscape, and estate development works related to Castle Semple and Barr Lochs, and the development of waterpower and Lochwinnoch industries in Paisley and Birmingham museums. Concern was expressed about the condition of the Peel Tower, the fishponds and other artefacts of the old Castle Semple Estate and Barr Castle. There is clearly a need to pull all this material together and use it in planning the wider footpath network and developing interest in, and an interpretation package for, the wider area including Lochwinnoch village.
- Interpretation and Education – There was complete agreement amongst relevant consultees that interpretation will make the project. In other words, is it simply about the building of a footpath, or the creation of a destination? As noted above, there are so many really important stories to tell about the loch, the estate, the village, the wildlife, the engineering (some of national significance) that need excellent interpretation using a raft of different media aimed at a range of audiences, be interactive, engage visitors, be fun and generate repeat visits. There was general support for reopening the Lochwinnoch Community Museum.

- Linkages – Consultees were clear that the priority in general terms was the path around the Castle Semple Loch, but that linkages to points of interest and the creation of a variety of footpath routes in terms of lengths, surfacings and gradients etc., was important. The value of circular routes was recognised. Linking the village to the station was also perceived to be crucial. Linking to Howwood Station also received support. Linkages and access further afield was also mentioned with the cycle track providing free and easy access from Social Inclusion Partnership areas in Ayrshire and Renfrewshire, for example, Foxbar, Millerston, Ferguslie Park, and Johnstone West.
- Funding – Whilst it was recognised that building the path would be an expensive exercise, it was also felt by many that the project met so many objectives and had so many benefits that finding the capital monies would be possible. However, concern was expressed that finding monies for ongoing maintenance could be a harder task. The funding objectives identified included the following:-
  - Access for All
  - Community involvement
  - Social Inclusion
  - Education
  - Health
  - Sustainable Transport and
    - safe routes to stations
    - safe routes to schools
  - Recycling
  - Nature conservation and interpretation
  - Built heritage preservation
  - Rural deprivation
  - Economic Development (including tourism)
  - Tree planting/management
- Support – With the exception of one landowner, all consultees supported the proposed round the loch footpath, and the development of a local path network. Consultees recognised that the project has a wide range of potential benefits for the Park, the RSPB, Sustrans, the environment, the local community, the local economy, the wider community including the disadvantaged and all those within day trip distance of Lochwinnoch.  
It was also recognised that this project could be the catalyst in transforming Castle Semple and Lochwinnoch into a major recreational destination.

## 6.0 Survey of Existing and Potential Footpath Routes

### 6.1 A760, Roadhead to Lochwinnoch Station

A footpath abuts the A760 from Roadhead roundabout to Lochwinnoch on the northern side as far as the RSPB and then on the southern side as far as Lochlip Road. It is of variable width although generally very narrow. The speed and proximity of passing traffic makes this an unattractive and potentially unsafe route for pedestrians, particularly in wet weather when spray adds to the discomfort.

Improvements to the Roadhead roundabout are planned to be implemented in late 2003 to early 2004. The proposals include a new wide footpath, separated from the carriageway, but this will not extend as far north as Lochwinnoch Station. There is an Express Bus Stop at the roundabout to serve Lochwinnoch, the RSPB, and the station. This report therefore considers that priority should be given to completing this “missing link” to the station.

### 6.2 Lochwinnoch Station

Lochwinnoch Station is operated by Scotrail and lies on the line from Glasgow to Ayr. As it serves Lochwinnoch and the RSPB reserve, it is a focal point for encouraging cyclists and walkers into the area, but in the wider context, it is also vital in encouraging rail rather than car commuting into Glasgow. Access to the station can currently be taken directly from the A760 at the railway overbridge (descent to the platform is via steps), or further north via the vehicular car park access. An existing surfaced and lit footpath in good condition extends from the A760/car park access to the station. This footpath is not adopted by Renfrewshire Council. The southbound platform is reached via steps and an overbridge (Photo Nos 9 & 10).

At present, there are several problems with this facility:-

- a) Pedestrian and vehicular safety
  - i. The A760 can be very busy with fast-moving traffic. The footpath abutting the north side of the A760 from the RSPB to Lochwinnoch Station is narrow and poorly surfaced. There is no footpath at the railway bridge itself.
  - ii. Pedestrian access through the car park is hidden from the A760 by a tree and scrub-covered embankment, and it is perceived as dangerous, particularly in the dark.
  - iii. Access to the RSPB reserve and the start of the proposed cycle/footpath necessitates crossing the busy A760 currently taken at the overbridge or at the car park entrance. Neither location is a safe crossing point at present (Photo No 11).
  - iv. The access and egress from the car park by car is poor in terms of visibility and has an awkward angle of access when approaching from the west bound carriageway. Vehicles are required to swing onto the opposite carriageway to enter station road. Egress visibility is poor

in both directions but particularly poor for drivers turning to travel east.

- b) Lack of ramped access restricts the use by wheelchair users, buggies and cyclists.
- c) No cycle storage facility.
- d) Limited parking.
- e) Inadequate covered waiting areas in both directions.
- f) No welcoming signs and information about local attractions.
- g) An unattractive amenity visually in terms of surfacing, boundaries and landscape treatment. It would benefit from screening and new fencing along the boundary of the adjacent derelict and currently unused land.

Many of the above issues can be resolved through design of an attractive landscaped car park and waiting area incorporating ramped accesses, cycle storage facilities, information in a covered waiting area, and increased number of parking spaces.

The safety issue is more complicated in that other agencies (Roads Department) are involved, however, resolution of the safety issue is crucial for the footpath link to work. The key factors are:-

- Provision of a controlled A760 crossing.
- Encouraging direction of pedestrians entering and leaving the station to this safe crossing point.
- Ensure that car park access sight lines comply with current regulations and that signs are adequate to warn of the approaching junction.

Replacing the overgrown scrub embankment with suitable, more open, landscaping including a designated footpath and further lighting would encourage use of the car park access as a more attractive option for pedestrians and cyclists than direct access onto the A760 from the overbridge.

To prevent egress from the station onto the A760 by way of the overbridge, the current access will need to be stopped up.

### 6.3 Lochwinnoch Station to Castle Semple Centre

The potential A760 pedestrian crossing which is a crucial link to the footpath has been outlined above. A suitable crossing point at this location for maximum visibility is required preferably with a central “island” and electronic push button control. Any such crossing will include measures to alert and slow down motorists from both directions.

There is an existing footpath along the south side of the A760 from Station Road to Lochlip Road and beyond. The road crossing at Lochlip Road offers poor visibility for both pedestrians and motorists.

From the north side of the proposed A760 crossing point, starting at the RSPB entrance, there is an existing roadside footpath which extends west to the River Calder Bridge and Lochlip Road, passing open views north over flat reed beds and Castle Semple Loch. The land here is permanently wet and has been identified as sensitive for birds. The proposed Station/RSPB link to the Castle Semple Centre crosses this ground, tight to the A760, until a proposed bridge crossing of the Calder.

River bank areas on either side of the Calder Bridge (north side of A760) could potentially be developed for small-scale informal recreation though both are liable to flood on occasion. At present, there is a gap allowing unauthorised vehicular access to the south side which should be stopped up for safety, and to prevent further ground erosion. The south side is the access point for an informal path along the north bank of the River Calder. It is used mainly by fishermen, and additional usage should not be encouraged because of bird sensitivity (Photo No 13).

The north side forms part of a maintained grass recreation area and would be an appropriate location for play equipment and seating. There is sufficient space to expand the existing car park for the recreation area accessed off Lochlip Road.

Lochlip Road itself is narrow with a combination of overgrown, raised, or non-existent verges (Photo No 13). Signage to the Castle Semple Centre from Church Street/Lochlip Road is well marked. Rationalising this access road and improving the junction visibility at Church Street and St Winnoc Road have been identified as desirable objectives (Photo No 15).

Lochlip Road leads to the Castle Semple Centre car park past the sewage works on the right. There is no formal footpath along this section of Lochlip Road though it is partially served by the Sustrans cycle path.

The Castle Semple Centre car park is well used all year. Expansion of the car park with integral landscape structure as part of the footpath project would benefit facility users and Lochwinnoch itself. A former railway embankment, now carrying the National Cycle Route, separates the car park and Castle Semple Centre from Lochwinnoch. Its removal, with the three bridges (which are a maintenance burden and cause visibility problems at this junction) would better integrate the village with the Loch and open up many possibilities for loch side development including integration of the National Cycle Route (Photo No 16).

#### 6.4 Castle Semple Centre to Low Semple Holdings

Entry to the existing path from the Castle Semple Centre is unheralded by informative signs or attractive designed “gateway”. This should be remedied by making an informative feature of this entry point with advice on route, distance and points of interest along the way.

The first section of the existing footpath leading from the Castle Semple Centre to the field gate beyond Blackditch Bay has been recently refurbished, 2.5 – 3.0 m wide and surfaced with whin dust (Photo No 17). Several “perch” seats have been provided en route which have proved popular but some of the attractive natural viewpoints have no seating provision or information regarding the features viewed. Providing such “incidental” facilities would

enhance the visitor experience. The landscape character from the Visitor Centre to Blackditch Bay is generally open with intermittent groups of trees and scrub along the loch shore.

An attractive tree-lined grass track curves northwards from the main path, crossing the cycle path by an old stone bridge and leads to Parkhill Smallholdings. This land is in private ownership but a new path along this line could provide access into Parkhill Woods and, via a new path, to the top of Jonshill Road.

Blackditch Bay is a natural focal point, in terms of distance (it is approximately halfway along the north side of the loch), its attractive natural configuration of south-facing bay, stream and island, and the fine views it commands over the Loch. Access can be taken to the National Cycle Route at this point by an existing path though the gradient is too steep for disabled access. Adaptation of the existing path or provision of a new one would be required to allow disabled access. Provision of picnic facilities, viewing platform and interpretation board, and perhaps low-key play equipment would allow concentration of users at this point. There are currently plans to introduce reed beds to the mouth of Blackditch Burn and this would be included in any proposals for the area (Photo No 18).

Beyond Blackditch Bay the footpath character becomes more enclosed for a short section with Birch scrub flourishing on the upper (north) side of the footpath. A locked field gate displays a notice prohibiting access further north, though a stile at the Loch shore allows access to the able-bodied. A combination of stock-proof fencing, lockable field gate, and pedestrian/equestrian access (such as a self-locking gate) needs to be addressed. The path is in reasonable condition though there are sections which are difficult to cross because of poor drainage, in some locations exacerbated by cattle puddling. As this section is prone to flooding, the path will need to be raised and realigned to slightly higher ground.

It was noted from the field gate restricting access along the path to Low Semple Holdings there is a series of field gates along the field boundary. These gates open outwards from the adjacent fields and were all open at the time of survey. This situation would interfere with passage along a high path alignment closer to the fence.

#### 6.5 Low Semple to Fancy Bridge

To remain in Local Authority Land from Low Semple Holdings to Fancy Bridge, access is currently taken across a plank bridge set over a wide man-made ditch and a fence stile. The planks are frequently removed and the option is to pass for a short distance over private farmland.

At present there is no path between the Low Semple residences and Castle Semple Loch or Fancy Bridge. The ground is wet and the footpath should be aligned as high as possible, close to the Local Authority boundary. There is an opportunity here for some group planting as it is fairly exposed, provided open

views from the houses are not compromised. As arrival at Fancy Bridge offers a choice of route (Howwood or round Castle Semple Loch) it would be an appropriate seating and information point (Photo No 19).

It is desirable in the area of Low Semple Holdings to take an access link to the existing north access road to the houses which continues round under the former railway bridge and on to the Collegiate Church, a listed building of historical interest. An additional ramp link from the National Cycle Route to the footpath from Parkhill Woods would provide a further option for a circular route and encourage cycle path and loch side users to visit the Church.

## 6.6 Fancy Bridge to RSPB

Arrival at Fancy Bridge affords the opportunity to join the existing path northwards to Howwood or to continue round the Loch. The latter cannot be achieved at present since there is no bridge crossing of the Black Cart Water. A bridge crossing of Black Cart Water here, at its narrowest point, and minor crossing of the Risk Burn making use of existing abutments, would allow the path to continue round to the south side of Castle Semple Loch. There is no existing path along this section until the turn off to Lochside Bay and Peel Tower is reached, although there are sections where the line of a former path is discernible and can be seen on historical maps.

From Fancy Bridge to the end of the “canal” (an historical drainage channel separated from Castle Semple Loch by a stone revetment), the landscape is open allowing long views south and west across the loch and north to Kenmure Hill with its “Temple”. The Risk Burn forms an attractive natural feature with associated streamside trees dominated by alder. Provision of a seat would be welcome at this location.

From the Risk Burn crossing there are two possible routes for the footpath to take:

The first, and preferred, option is to climb gently alongside the Risk Burn to the upper slopes of the railway embankment, and follow the railway embankment westwards. The land here is drier and spectacular views over the loch are obtained from high points. This route passes a stand of mature trees (Photo No 30), an area identified as a suitably attractive picnic spot.

The path would then descend to a point just south of the “canal” end where it would join the path through the woods to the RSPB.

The second option is to traverse the low-lying wet ground within Local Authority ownership, following the fence line with gappy hedge and occasional mature trees – remnants of former policy planting. The vegetation between the fence line and the loch is unmaintained long grass and reeds, characteristic of such areas. Scrub dominated by willow is developing around the fence line. Particularly wet ground conditions occur to the north of the “canal” end. The section of land between the fence line and the Loch contains a partially collapsed culvert which may pose safety issues if access is not restricted by fencing. Although a path can be constructed here (and in terms of land ownership would be simpler), its disadvantages are:-



- High construction costs because of ground conditions
- Possible safety issues because of culvert
- No high viewpoint or suitable picnic area
- The route does not take advantage of Risk Burn which is an attractive feature
- Possible disturbance to an interesting area for birds.

From the end of the “canal”, the landscape character changes to become wooded and enclosed. The going is interrupted by very wet areas, frequent fallen trees and understorey vegetation. It is, however, an attractive mixed deciduous woodland and glimpses of the Loch are obtained through the trees. A number of small drainage ditches and watercourses are crossed in this area. Restoration of the ditches and piping watercourses under the path will solve existing problems of wet ground.

The wooded section continues until the junction with the existing RSPB path is reached. En route there is a turn off to an attractive pebble beach. It is a potential point of interest and seating area and, as such, the access path and bridge require upgrading and made safe. Engineering work will also be required to repair the canal sluice.

A further access to the Loch is taken from the end of the existing path leading to a small bay where there is an existing memorial seat known as Tods Seat. The shore around the bay is suffering from erosion, and apart from one seat offers no other amenity. It would make an ideal complimentary picnic/visitor area to Blackditch Bay, almost opposite, on the other side of the Loch.

From the bay, a rough narrow path continues west along the top of a narrow embankment, breached in several locations, to the Peel Tower. The Peel Tower is a scheduled ancient monument in poor state of repair. Made safe and with its history and former appearance recognised in an information board, it would make an attractive destination. It originally incorporated a boat landing area and the reinstatement and use of this feature would be an additional loch side attraction.

The continuing existing rough path from the Peel Tower to Lochall Bridge passes areas highly sensitive to birds and additional use which might arise from path upgrading, is not desirable in this respect. The section of this path from the existing hide to Lochall Bridge will remain in its present condition which is adequate for bird watchers.

From the bay turn-off to Lochside House underpass under the railway, the main path passes through woodland and scrub and there are no Loch views. There are strands of same age semi-mature alder and birch which could be managed to create a more interesting structure, perhaps by a combination of coppicing and selective felling.

From Lochside House underpass, the path is shared with vehicular traffic accessing Lochside House. Existing problems relate to broken or inadequate drainage, which are relatively easily remedied. Two bird hides are situated beside this section of path. There are several fallen trees between the path and railway embankment, and their dramatic exposed root formation and “micro-ecosystems” may offer points of interest, particularly for educational walks and activities.

The final section of path leads to the RSPB Centre and passes through mature trees. The existing path alignment should be retained but its levels raised over wet areas. As with the north side Visitor Centre, the start of the footpath should be well marked and advice on path lengths, points of interest, and other relevant information provided.

If the RSPB car park is extended eastwards, a new short linking section of path may be required.

## **7.0 Constraints**

### **7.1 Designations**

A full list of the relevant designations are included in paragraph 4.5. In terms of constructing the footpath, the SSSI designation potentially could be restricting. However, provided the proposals are carefully researched and the path routed sensitively, and the potentially damaging operations listed in the designation (see Appendix 3) are addressed, problems should be avoided or overcome. Close consultation with SNH, Renfrewshire Council, and all the organisations listed in Table 7 (EIA Scoping Matrix) is recommended.

### **7.2 Wildlife and Botanical Interest**

The proposed path around Castle Semple Loch encircles and dissects an area of high ecological significance. The Castle Semple Loch, Aird Meadow Loch and surrounding marshes are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) giving a special need for careful consideration of the route and the necessary future ecological survey work. Map 1 shows the boundary of the SSSI. A list of “Potentially Damaging Operations” for the Castle Semple and Barr Lochs SSSI is available in Appendix 3.

#### **7.2.1 Existing Data**

7.2.1 This section details ecological data already available and where it can be found. This will be made available to the ecological consultancy employed to carry out future survey work.

#### **7.2.2 Birds**

Castle Semple Loch and Aird Meadow are regionally important for breeding and wintering wetland species including seven breeding *red listed* species and thirteen *amber listed*, it also has wintering populations of nine amber listed species. As a section of the proposed route falls within the boundary of the *Lochwinnoch Nature Reserve* leased by the RSPB, there is already a

considerable amount of bird data available. RSPB staff also count the wildfowl on Castle Semple Loch once a month for the *Wetland Bird Survey* (WEBS). The following bird records are available at the RSPB Nature Reserve.

- 1) Wetland Bird Survey records
- 2) Breeding Birds
- 3) Common Bird Census
- 4) Annual Bird Reports
- 5) Historical Records (dating back to 1791)
- 6) Species of Conservation Concern
- 7) Renfrewshire Local Biodiversity Plan species
- 8) Lochwinnoch Reserve bird list
- 9) Lochwinnoch Birds (all species recorded since 1974)
- 10) Peaks of Wildfowl
- 11) Clyde Muirshiel Bird Records
- 12) Clyde Bird Reports

### 7.2.3 Mammals

Twenty four species of mammal have been recorded in the area. A full list of mammals recorded within the area of Castle Semple Loch and the RSPB Nature Reserve is contained as Appendix 10

Very little formal recording of mammals has taken place within the park or the RSPB. Mammal records are noted in the RSPB logbook. Regional Park countryside rangers note any sightings on patrol sheets and some mammal records are held on “Recorder”, the ecological database held at Barnbrock Farm. Joseph Greenlees has carried out an informal otter survey whilst working at the RSPB reserve, details available from Starling Learning. Len Howcutt has carried out various bat surveys in the area. Information available from Clyde Muirshiel.

Four of the recorded mammals are classified as “rare, scarce, and/or declining in the UK”; Pipistrelle Bat, Brown Long-Eared Bat, Water Vole, and European Otter. They are also all on Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act*.

### 7.2.4 Fourteen of the mammal species in the area also appear in the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. The following are Biodiversity Action Plan Species:-

#### Priority Species of Conservation Concern

Water Vole	<i>Arvicola terrestris</i>
European Otter	<i>Lutra lutra lutra</i>
Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>

#### Species of Conservation Concern

Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>
Stoat	<i>Mustela erminea</i>
Weasel	<i>Mustela daubentonii</i>
Daubentons Bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>

Brown Long Eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>
Water Shrew	<i>Neomys fodiens</i>
Common Shrew	<i>Sorex araneus</i>
Pygmy Shrew	<i>Sorex minutes</i>
Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>

#### 7.2.5 Vegetation

The area of wetland around the Castle Semple and Aird Meadow lochs is one of the largest in southwest Scotland. The lochs are fringed by marsh/fen vegetation in turn fringed by scrub and mixed deciduous woodland. The most important area of marsh and fen contains important plant communities, one of the most important being known as the *Carex versicaria* Swamp which is rare south of the highland line. This includes a large area of regionally important Mountain Water Sedge, *Carex aquatilis*. Many of the communities are also of regional and national importance.

So far 238 vascular plants have been recorded in the area.

National Vegetation Classification (NVC) has been carried out on the Castle Semple Loch area, Vegetation Survey 1994, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The NVC map, Sheet 19, with target notes is available from Clyde Muirshiel. Details of the *Carex aquatilis* swamp are available from the RSPB.

#### 7.2.6 Notable species of National Importance: Eight-stamened Waterwort (*Elatine hydropiper*), Tufted Loosetrife (*Lysimuchia thyrsoiflora*).

Notable species of Regional Importance : Mountain Water Sedge (*Carex aquatilis*), Great Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*), Marsh Yellowcress (*Roripa sylvestris*), Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*), Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*), Cuckoo Pint (*Arum maculatum*), Birds Nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*), Reed Canary Grass (*Glyceria maxima*), Bladder Sedge (*Carex Vesicaria*), Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), and Marsh Stitchwort (*Stellaria palustris*).

#### 7.2.7 Held at the Lochwinnoch RSPB Nature Reserve

Beaumont, D.J. 1996, *Management of the Phalaris arundinacea on RSPB Nature Reserves*.

Hawell, J.R. 1992, *RSPB Lochwinnoch-list of Vascular plants on the reserve*.

Milne, J 1998, *Tall herb fen and swamp monitoring at the Loch Ken-River Dee Marshes and Lochwinnoch Reserves*. RSPB Report.

Rae, D. 1993, *National Vegetation Survey Lochwinnoch Reserve*.

MacFarlane, M.S. 1971, *A survey of the vegetation of Aird Meadow and Castle Semple Loch*. Glasgow University.

Held by Renfrewshire Council

Watson, K. Phase One Habitat Survey, Renfrewshire Council. Mainly outwith the area of the path as NVC data was available already for the area.

#### 7.2.8 Invertebrates

A very under-recorded group in the area. 7 species of Odonata, 12 species of Lepidoptera (butterflies) and 54 species of Lepidoptera (moths) have been recorded. The RSPB have some Moth, Butterfly, Dragonfly and Damselfly records. Some invertebrate data is held in “Recorder” at Barnbrock Farm.

Creighton, H. 1982, The results of a small survey of the terrestrial insects on the Lochwinnoch Reserve.

#### 7.2.9 Herptiles

No reptiles have been recorded. Four species of amphibian are recorded: Common Frog, Toad, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt. RSPB have some Amphibian records.

#### 7.2.10 Fish

Nine species have been recorded including Salmon.

### 7.3 Flooding, Ground Conditions and Engineering Issues

As previously discussed in Section 4.6.4, the complex issue of circumstances contributing to flooding of the area are the subject of the Three Lochs Project report.

This study has reviewed the implications of the above report and incorporates engineering solutions to minimise the impact of the new path scheme on the hydrological conditions of Castle Semple Loch and environs.

The variation in ground conditions around the Loch have also been taken into consideration in determining the new paths location and construction.

The specific applications are described later in Section 9.0 proposals.

### 7.4 Ownerships

For the basic footpath route around the loch, land ownership is not an issue given Renfrewshire Council ownership encircles the loch (see Figure 2)

However, the preferred route of the path from Fancy Bridge to the end of the “canal” or beginning of the woods en route to the RSPB, is on privately owned ground. Whilst initial consultation suggests that this is not a problem, confirmation and agreements will have to be obtained before any construction work would commence.

On the northern side of the loch, between the Fisherman's gate and Low Semple, claimed rights to move cattle and use the water of the loch for drinking will also need to be researched and potential conflicts resolved.

Proposals for Station improvements will also require the cooperation and agreement of Network Rail and maybe SPT too. Pursuit of the option to expand the area for parking will also involve a local landowner and acquisition of additional land from him.

## 7.5 User Requirements

The following user groups were identified in the appointment brief:-

- Walkers (including young families with prams)
- Wheelchair users
- Cyclists
- Horse Riders

Consultation within the Core Group has established a preference for unsegregated joint cycle and pedestrian use of the path scheme, with a segregated track/bridleway for horses if land area and funding permit.

In the view of the new access legislation, the exclusion of a particular group requires careful consideration, but may be necessary from a safety point of view, due to the often limited width available for construction.

Having established the minimum user requirement as an unsegregated path/cycle track, reference to the Scottish Executive Publication "Cycle by Design" recommends the absolute minimum path width of 2.0 metres should be adopted.

The path surfacing material can generally be determined by the end user and the proposals considered by this study are discussed further in Section 9.0 Proposals.

The only exception to this is the connection from Lochwinnoch Village to the Station, which should be constructed in accordance with Renfrewshire Councils requirements if it is to be submitted for funding contribution and future adoption.

## **8.0 Opportunities**

### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Lochwinnoch is a fascinating area with an enormous amount of information available on the ecology, history and geography. The following section outlines some guidelines for interpretation, information on what to interpret and a few suggestions on how to interpret. It is important to note that these items of information are all points of interest that can readily be viewed and understood in situ by users of the path. It is envisaged that the interpretation can be changed periodically as there is so much information available, thus increasing the interest of the area for repeat visitors.

There is also a wealth of talent within the village and details are given of local people with skills useful to the development of the path. The strong sense of community within Lochwinnoch means there will doubtless be great interest in this project and a large number of events and community involvement should be possible.

## 8.2 A Footpath Network

8.2.1 A path network should offer a variety of routes in terms of length, walking/cycling times, gradients, surfaces, interest, related activities, linkages to other footpath networks and modes of transport. It is accepted wisdom and proven by survey that a series of circular walks should form the basis of a network. Castle Semple, Lochwinnoch and environs have the potential for the establishment of a footpath network that demonstrates all the above attributes. The basic circle is around the Castle Semple Loch, a walk of some 2.5 hours. There is a variety of means of access, for example, the cycle track, the train station, car parks at the RSPB, the Annexe, and Castle Semple itself. There are, and could be, a range of attractions including the RSPB Centre, bird hides, viewing and sitting areas, visiting platforms in the water, interpretation points, bridges, activities and refreshments at Castle Semple Centre, picnic areas, buildings and artefacts of historical, engineering and landscape interest, and potentially a link to Howwood and existing links to Lochwinnoch, Kilbarchan, Johnstone, Paisley, Glasgow, Kilbirnie, Irvine and beyond. Potentially, there is a variety of surface finishes, and whilst it is more or less level, existing and potential linking routes offer a greater variety of slopes and gradients.

8.2.2 Figure No 3 indicates some of the potential links and circular routes, for example :-

- a path linking the top of the village or Jonshill to Parkhill Woods and going south to join the loch side path using the old northern access route to Castle Semple Centre. This provides a circular route from Castle Semple Centre, which takes in a part of the village, and includes an elevated viewpoint, a length of cycle track, or loch shore footpath. It could also take in a reopened village museum and shops, by extending the route westwards to use Church Street instead of Winnoc Road.

- by using the potential Jonshill/Parkhill link, a Castle Semple Centre to Blackditch Bay, Parkhill to Jonshill to Castle Semple Centre, a circular route can be created. This would have a variety of surfaces, gradients, attractions/points of interest, viewing areas, picnic spots, historic features and nature conservation interest.

- by using the path from Parkhill Wood past the Collegiate Church to link with the cycle track, and the loch side path in the area of Low Semple, a number and variety of circular routes would be created. A small car park in the vicinity of the Church would offer a further link and point from which to begin walking.

- by using the old eastern entrance track from the Howwood Road to Castle Semple Mansion, a link to Howwood Station is possible. A short travel up this road would provide a link

back onto the cycle track and on to Kilbarchan or back to Lochwinnoch. There is also the possibility of a footpath on the southern bank of the River Black Cart, which would also provide a link to Howwood and the station.

- 8.2.3 The cycle track is used by walkers, wheelchairs, cyclists, buggies and children's bikes, and horses. None of the existing footpaths are used by horses. There are potential conflicts between users especially between horse riders and others. Many people are afraid of horses and they can 'spook' at bicycles, prams or noisy behaviour. Ideally there should be a separate track for horses but there is not sufficient room. Sustrans and the local branch of the British Horse Society (BHS), have agreed a code of conduct as follows:-
- Riders must show consideration for other users
  - Riders must keep to the path to avoid damage to verges
  - Riders must remove horse droppings themselves
- 8.2.4 Other potential conflicts between cyclists, walkers, children on bikes etc., have been addressed elsewhere by dividing rails, white lines etc., but experience suggests these can cause as much conflict between users as the original problem. Discussion of this issue at Core Group meetings and during consultations (see section 5.1.1), brought forward the firm conclusion that horse riders would not be encouraged to use the footpath following the southern shore of the loch and through the RSPB reserve. Cyclists would be allowed to use this path but would be asked to dismount within the RSPB reserve to prevent potential conflicts with school and educational groups.

### 8.3 Land Ownership

- 8.3.1 Fortunately, the local authority owns a sufficiently wide strip of land around the loch to complete a path around it. Only where there are options or linkages do paths cross privately owned land. Three landowners are amenable to footpaths crossing their land, two are not and one is unknown. To achieve some important linkages in and around Parkhill Woods detailed negotiations will be required, and the proposed provisions of the new Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 may prove to be most useful.

### 8.4 Topography

- 8.4.1 For adults with young children, the elderly and physically handicapped, a more or less level footpath, but with variety and interest, is preferred. Both the cycle path and the path around the loch have these qualities. This is likely to add to the use and popularity of the path. Contrast and harder exercise is provided by the paths in Parkhill Wood ascending Parkhill, and also by the potential link to Jonshill.

### 8.5 Economic Development



- 8.5.1 The SER Tourism Strategy identifies the LEC area as attracting 2.1 million visitors in 1999 with half of those being day visitors. The strategy also identified significant strengths and opportunities (see section 3.3.3) with one being a latent day visitor market in close proximity to the area.
- 8.5.2 The strategy suggests that one means of opening up this market is to increase and improve activity provision such as de-stressing outdoor activities and events, focussed on the area's rural resources, and generally to improve the quality and range of tourism products.
- 8.5.3 The SRANI project can satisfy the requirements outlined above and given the potential visitor numbers involved, the economic spin-off for the locality could be substantial. To benefit fully, however, the CMRP, the RSPB and Lochwinnoch business community need to cooperate to initiate improvements to premises, to increasing car parking facilities in the village and at attractions, to improving the quality of service and to effective marketing of Lochwinnoch as a quality day trip destination with a range of attractions.
- 8.5.4 Proposals to expand and enhance Castle Semple Centre need to be prepared or dusted off, and revived, for example, plans for the expansion of Castle Semple Centre (see Appendix 8) by removing the railway embankment should be reviewed and updated. Revised plans could provide more parking, could encourage the establishment of craft workshops, alternative foods or therapies, commercially run bicycle sales and hire, artist studios, a site for a relocated RSPB, a community facility, space for outdoor events and festivals etc. The village itself could consider a range of improvements including increased off street car parking, townscape improvements, better signage, interpretation of village history, a re-opened museum etc.
- 8.5.5 A round the loch path linked to a wide network including National Cycle Route 7, will lead to a large increase in visitor numbers. The opportunities to benefit the local economy, the Park and RSPB are obvious and potentially enormous. Much will depend on the continued existence of the Core Group, sustaining effort, providing the motivation and leadership needed to pull the varied threads together to develop a comprehensive and achievable project.

## **8.6 Car Parking and Traffic Management**

- 8.6.1 It is considered that the implementation of this new project around the loch whether in whole or in part, will generate increased visitor numbers by foot, cycle, train, and car. This increase will put further pressure on the need for local infrastructure improvements.
- 8.6.2 Pedestrians are reasonably well served, but further improvements are one of the targets of this project.
- 8.6.3 Cyclists should also be provided with improved and extended routes as the project is implemented. Increased numbers will necessitate the provision of

new short and long term secure storage at the main attractions i.e. the station, RSPB Visitor Centre, Castle Semple Centre, and within Lochwinnoch.

- 8.6.4 The anticipated increase in visitors arriving by car will also apply pressure on the above centres to increase parking provision. There is an opportunity to extend and reorganise parking at the RSPB centre and add in the order of 20 spaces. There is also an opportunity to increase parking at the Annexe, again by about 20 spaces. Removal of the railway embankment behind Castle Semple Centre would allow a doubling of car parking spaces (which staff are suggesting is required) to 280 spaces.
- 8.6.5 As a consequence of the increased numbers of foot, 2 and 4 wheel traffic, this project offers the opportunity to upgrade traffic management within Lochwinnoch and specifically at the junctions of Lochlip Road and Church Street, and also at the Castle Semple Centre entrance.

## **8.7 Cycling and Sustainable Transport**

- 8.7.1 The use of the cycle track has been growing and local observation suggests that the recent surfacing improvements have probably doubled the use at Lochwinnoch. It has also increased use and the perceived accessibility of Castle Semple from Kilbirnie and Ayrshire. We believe a path around the loch with associated links and attractions has the potential to generate a very large further increase in use of the area by cyclists and walkers. We also suggest that the cycle hire operation at Castle Semple could be busier through better advertising, signposting, and a more 'commercial' approach. The cycle repair and hire shop at Bowling canal basin might be an example to try and emulate. The provision of a safe access route linking the village, cycle track and Castle Semple Centre to the station, combined with Council, Park, RSPB, Sustrans and SPT marketing initiatives could encourage the use of the train to Lochwinnoch and Howwood stations by walkers and cyclists looking for a day out. We believe there is potential for a significant increase in day visits by public transport to participate in walking and cycling activities. A more frequent train service would be very useful in this respect.

## **8.8 Community Involvement**

- 8.8.1 Lochwinnoch retains a strong community feeling and there are a large number of active societies, groups and village social events. The Millennium Events Group has been enterprising enough to obtain funding from the Scottish Rural Partnership Challenge Fund for a Sustainable Communities Officer (SCO). The village has enjoyed one year of a three-year appointment. The SCO has established a walking club and a gardening club, which has gone on to obtain funding for a Sustainable Community Garden using landfill tax monies. Other tasks of the SCO include youth activities, recycling, and sustaining local businesses. The existence of the Lochwinnoch Millennium

Events Group and its associated charitable company opens the door to a wide range of funding opportunities, which could not only help fund basic path construction works but also add value and impetus to the wider benefits predicted of the project.

- 8.8.2 The RSPB and SUSTRANS are membership organisations and both are able to call on volunteer help, which could be useful to SRANI.

## **8.9 Training**

- 8.9.1 The construction of a path network could provide a variety of training opportunities for a number of groups such as young people, long term unemployed, adults with disabilities and students studying countryside management courses. Both the RSPB and CMRP already work a great deal with volunteers and groups such as the *Scottish Wildlife Trust* trainees and also prison groups. The path, seating and associated interpretation will provide varied and interesting project opportunities for such groups. Training in countryside management skills such as drystone dyking, path construction and woodland management could be offered and conservation projects carried out such as pond creation and bird raft building. Grants should be available to both CMRP and the RSPB to offer training.

## **8.10 Education and Schools**

- 8.10.1 The existing situation  
There is currently an environmental education programme in place at both CMRP and the RSPB. At Castle Semple, environmental education visits are led by the countryside ranger service and water sports and other outdoor activities led by the rangers and by watersport instructors. The RSPB education programme is run by Starling Learning, environmental education agency. Each spring, Renfrewshire Council education department run a 'Classroom in the Environment' programme at Muirshiel Country Park, at the RSPB and at a variety of other wildlife sites including local nature reserves in Renfrewshire. The visits range from pre-school, through primary and secondary and further education establishments.
- 8.10.2 A large proportion of the current provision is based upon the 5-14 Environmental Studies curricular Guidelines, studying topics such as birds, minibeasts, pond life, habitats and woodlands. Some work is done on mapping, orienteering and social science.
- 8.10.3 The Lochwinnoch Primary School currently does not walk to the RSPB Nature Reserve due to the busy road and the lack of a safe crossing place. Several classes visit each year coming the short distance by bus. The proposed path would allow easy walking access for the school.

- 8.10.4 The RSPB have expressed an interest in increasing the number of schools visiting by train. This besides being cheaper for the schools is a good opportunity to promote sustainability.
- 8.10.5 The RSPB wish to greatly increase their provision of environmental education and in RSPB 'Future Directions' (their corporate strategy) it is a priority. There is, therefore, work underway to explore the opportunities to expand the number of schools visits to reserves. At present it is mainly science that is covered but this can be extended into history, geography and health. Many schools are promoting the health benefits of walking and they could, for example, get off the train at Howwood and walk to Lochwinnoch carrying out a number of curricular activities en-route.
- 8.10.6 Recent work by Starling Learning of the RSPB has shown a lack of suitable venues for Special Education Needs schools. The RSPB is investigating improvements that can be made to their education programme, nature centre and nature trails to accommodate such groups. New wheelchair accessible picnic benches have been installed and raised flowerbeds suitable for use by disabled children. This too could be promoted as part of the new path network.
- 8.10.7 There are opportunities for combined projects between CMRP, RSPB and Starling Learning. For example, a teaching pack offering ideas for study around the path with a countryside ranger/field teacher led programme.
- 8.10.8 The Calder Bridge is an ideal teaching area for river studies, there would be increased access to this site for both CMRP and RSPB groups.
- 8.10.9 There have been recent discussions with Nigel Scrivens, education development officer with Renfrewshire Council regarding the expansion of the 'Classroom in the Environment' project. There are many opportunities that can be explored using the new path for a wide range of topics.

## **8.11 Health and Well-being**

- 8.11.1 Paths address the issues raised in 'Scotland's Health – A Challenge To Us All' by providing the opportunity for the 30 minutes moderate activity each day recommended as the minimum basis for physical health. They also improve mental health by reducing stress and promoting relaxation. Walking is set to play a bigger role in creating a healthier nation. Health experts describe walking as 'almost perfect exercise', and it is socially inclusive, as it requires no equipment or expense, and is the ideal way for most people to become more active. Various health initiatives aim to get more people walking in their own communities, especially those who take little exercise or live in areas of poor health.

## **8.12 Listed buildings and structures**

- 8.12.1 Starting at Lochwinnoch, a circular path around Castle Semple Loch will take in the village Conservation Area with its 18<sup>th</sup> century domestic architecture,

the remains of railway architecture/engineering from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Collegiate Church built by John Semple in 1504, the wooded walks of Parkhill Woods with its Grotto, fishponds and ice caves - all relics of a designed estate landscape – the remains of the Semple Mansion House, built in 1740 at Low Semple, the Fancy Bridge on what was the eastern driveway to the house, the evidence of the culvert and open canal as part of the drainage works to the Barr Loch and Aird Meadows, the Peel Tower built on an island in 1550, but now joined to the land by engineered bunds (again as part of the Barr Loch drainage works), the A760 which is on a causeway between the Barr and Castle Semple Lochs, and which replaced a ferry, and to Church Street and the village again. A journey spanning the years from 1504 covering some of the most turbulent years of Scottish history and involving some of the best-known Scottish families - a wonderful interpretation and educational opportunity on Glasgow's doorstep. The Peel Tower, Parkhill Woods, the historic landscape, the fishponds, and the Fancy Bridge are in need of some repair, restoration and ongoing management, and access to the Collegiate Church requires resolution. The southern shores of Castle Semple once revealed are in need of repair, as are the bunds joining the Peel Tower to the loch shores. The underground culvert at the southeastern end of the loch also should be made safe or restored given increased public access.

8.12.2 The Collegiate Church (Photo No 7) is probably the most important ancient monument in the study area. Adequate public access to this monument has been prevented by an adjacent landowner, using an agreement made with CMRP dating back to its formation. This needs to be revoked using the new Access legislation to take the opportunity to access the Church from the cycle track, Parkhill Wood, the proposed loch shore path, and the Low Semple access track from the Howwood Road. Space could be found for a small car park signed off the Howwood Road.

8.12.3 Appendix 11 is a list of the listed buildings and structures in the study area.

### **8.13 Landscape Restoration**

8.13.1 The 1857 plan of Castle Semple indicates the extent of the designed landscape (see Figure No 4).

8.13.2 The current project offers only minor scope for restoration in two areas, namely:-

- 1) Avenue planting on the northern loch shore path which was the old western entrance driveway to Castle Semple Mansion, and
- 2) Boundary planting to the council owned land on the southern shore of the loch.

### **8.14 Social and Economic History, interpretation and education**

8.14.1 People first settled in the Lochwinnoch area around 3000 BC. There is a wealth of evidence of early ancestors in the Lochwinnoch area: flint tools from

the Stone Age, bronze axes and a dagger found on Gavilmoss Farm from the Bronze Age and also evidence of Celts in the Iron age. From earliest times the people of Lochwinnoch engaged in farming and weaving. Information on the history of Lochwinnoch area can be sought at Lochwinnoch and Paisley libraries and from the Lochwinnoch Historical Society. The bibliography lists historical publications found there. Of particular interest is the *Cairn of Lochwinnoch* written by Dr Andrew Crawford between 1827 and 1837. This is held in Paisley Library and there are 45 volumes of hand written notes. It is full of fascinating tales and information about Lochwinnoch people at that time.

8.14.2 The buildings and structures around the loch (see Figure 18) also provide an extraordinary collection of prompts and evidence of the social and economic development of Scotland. The Collegiate Church and Peel Tower provide opportunity to describe the powers of Paisley Abbey, the family and religious conflicts the Semples got caught up in, and the disaster of Flodden. Castle Semple estate demonstrates the agricultural revolution and the value of agriculture that enabled Castle Semple and the Barr Lochs to be drained at massive expense; the use of Irish labour for some of these quite startling engineering works; changes in family fortunes and the selling of estates; the use of wealth from the colonies to fund estate improvement works; the changing emphasis to tree planting; landscape improvement; the building of large mansions and sourcing income from industry rather than just agriculture; the use of water power in the mills of Paisley, and the influence on water lands in Castle Semple. Water power also drives the development of mills and the furniture making industry in Lochwinnoch, followed by the coming of the railways, and then by decline coming to the social and economic forces of the present day, the problems faced by rural communities of poor transport, shortage of affordable housing, lack of local job opportunities, sustaining local shops, the influence of the car, the commuter and the recreational needs of urban populations in nearby cities. A wonderful interpretation and educational opportunity on Glasgow's doorstep.

## 8.15 Interpretation

8.15.1 There is a need for a thoroughly researched Interpretative Strategy to be developed. Interpretation should be available to as wide an audience as possible and all difficulties of potential visitors should be considered. Details of accessible interpretation is available from *Interpret Scotland*.

Delivering equal access is important and benefits not only those with disabilities but all individuals visiting the site. Guidelines on good practise in producing good interpretation are also available from '*Writing Interpretation*', Scottish Natural Heritage. In order to meet the needs of as wide an audience as possible, the following points should be considered:-

- Disability Discrimination Act  
Barriers may be physical such as panels being too high to read, sensory, such as text being too small for someone with poor eyesight to read, intellectual, being too complex for some people with poor literacy to read.
- Accessibility age range to suit from young children to adults.
- Multicultural access.

- 8.15.2 The information in Appendix 12, “Relevant and Interesting Wildlife to the Area” can be supplemented by further information from CMRP rangers, RSPB and Starling Learning staff.
- 8.15.3 Appendix 13 lists the structures and points of interest that can still be seen mostly from the route of a path around the loch and will be worth mentioning in interpretation material. Figure 17 locates many of these points of interest on plan. Appendix 14 includes suggestions for interpretation media, provides an example of a Children’s Walk and identifies useful local contacts for information relating to interpretation.

## **8.16 Local Talent and Skills**

- 8.16.1 Lochwinnoch has an unusually wide range of local talent and skills that could make a contribution to enhancing the quality, interest and value of the footpath around the loch. Particular talents and skills include:-
- artists
  - sculptors
  - ornithologists
  - ecologists
  - historians and archaeologists
  - musicians
  - authors/writers
  - dry stone wallers
  - T.V presenters and media training
  - landscape design

## **8.17 Project Appeal**

The widespread support for this project was clearly demonstrated in the course of the extensive consultation exercise. The anticipated benefits of the footpath were predicted to be extremely varied, spread across society and highly significant for the CMRP, the RSPB and the village. The provision of the path with its improved village to station link and wider network, supports structure, local plan, and transport policies; the Park strategy; the wider aims of SNH and the Scottish Executive; SER Tourism Strategy and social inclusion objectives; Sustrans objectives; and the wishes of the Lochwinnoch community summarised in Section 3.

In section 5 of the report, at least twelve objectives suitable for funding were identified, as was the potential of the project to transform Castle Semple and Lochwinnoch into a major recreational destination.

## **8.18 Marketing and Promotion**

- 8.18.1 Research has identified that Renfrewshire suffers a negative perception in the minds of potential visitors contemplating a leisure day trip from home (Renfrewshire LEC Area Tourism Strategy). Whilst Castle Semple Centre and the RSPB currently attract visitors, if these are to be significantly increased, then this perception will have to be overcome.

- 8.18.2 Marketing is not part of our expertise, but there appear to be some basic decisions/actions to be taken that would go some way towards achieving the aim of establishing Lochwinnoch as a day/half-day destination.
- 8.18.3 The first of these decisions is that Castle Semple/Lochwinnoch needs to be marketed as a destination in its own right. The Core Group needs to take “ownership” of this area, and promote a joint marketing effort by the Council, SER, CMRP, RSPB, SUSTRANS, SPT and Historic Scotland. The area has attractions and interest for all, be it birds, nature study, walking, cycling, horse riding, water engineering, Scottish history, social and economic history, historic landscapes, archaeology, water sports, decent pubs and eating places.
- 8.18.4 The second decision is that all marketing material, be it prepared by CMRP or the RSPB should recognise and market the whole, and not just their bit.
- 8.18.5 The third decision is to integrate the CMRP and RSPB events programme better than it does at present, and also to include SUSTRANS events.
- 8.18.6 The fourth decision is to develop a village or loch events programme, building on what is currently happening or planned. The importance of successful events, be it water sports, folk/music festivals, farmers and other markets, dawn chorus walks, book launches, funfairs etc, etc, cannot tourism experts tell us, be overestimated.