
CLYDE MUIRSHIEL PARK AUTHORITY



Annual Report 2014 - 15



Presented to the Park Authority Joint Committee
September 2015

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1.0 Executive Summary

The past year was a challenging one with substantial savings to be made and with significant reductions in manpower. However Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority through the park staff has delivered on its aim to provide services that meet the needs of visitors and the communities within the Clyde Muirshiel area. The achievements and setbacks are summarised below and described more fully in the main report that follows. The full report is available from Park HQ or as a downloadable document on www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk

There was significant income generated for the Park in the form of direct and indirect funding from external grants, many of which were as a direct result of our major profile raising event of the year, Race2thegames. This income was used to increase our equipment base as well as financing activity programmes and helped offset some of the effects or the reduction of resources to the Park.

Our work with those most disadvantaged in society continues and is exemplified by our continued RYA sailability, Branching Out and volunteer programmes.

Data on visitor numbers to Park sites is being recorded, fully recognising the fact that we are an outdoor as well as an indoor attraction. Overall, numbers into the Regional Park for this reporting period have increased by nearly 5% despite the many other activities and attractions available in this year.

The Outdoor Activities team delivered activities to 5908 clients a rise of 77% on 2013/14. The Park continues to support and work in partnership with many Assisted Support Needs (ASN) Schools, many through grant aided programmes.

The Windows on Wildlife project (section 7.06) started running in October 2012 and finished in Sept 2014. The aim of this project was to develop and promote natural heritage using events and featuring camera and other imaging technologies to enhance wildlife viewing. The measures of success for this project included 1503 school children participating in the project and over 1500 attending the various talks.

The Park's online services continue to develop dramatically. The website has achieved 145,691 visits (137,633 in 2013) and 73,000 unique visitors (70,000 in 2013). The Park continues to improve its information and services in social media (see section 6.07).

The Park had an excellent safety record during the period 2014-15. There were no RIDDOR reportable incidents or illnesses and no other accidents or injuries to staff during the year.

The Park's Annual Accounts are satisfactory at the conclusion of the year. The Park showing a deficit on the year of £21,641 against a budgeted deficit of £26,300. This accommodating a decrease in requisitions of £164,700.

2.0 Introduction

Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority is a public body providing recreation, conservation and tourism services across the Regional Park. It owns no land but directly manages sites at Muirshiel, Greenock Cut, Lunderston Bay, Barnbrock and Castle Semple. The Park Authority is a Joint Committee of Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Councils.

The aims of Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority are:-

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, biodiversity and cultural heritage of Clyde Muirshiel Park.
- To encourage and enable learning, understanding and enjoyment of Clyde Muirshiel Park.
- To promote and foster environmentally sustainable development for the social and economic well being of the people and communities within the Clyde Muirshiel Park area.

Increasingly the benefits delivered by the Park Authority are recognised as making a positive contribution to wider national and local agendas in the areas of health improvement, active lifestyles, community engagement, volunteering and employability.

This report will present the work of the Park Authority and its staff in the year April 2014 to March 2015.

3.0 Active Lifestyle, Recreation and Access

3.01 Access legislation and the Code

The Ranger Service continues to promote responsible access to all recreational visitors and school groups. Liaising closely with the local landowners/managers to prevent conflict.

We still have a representative on the Renfrewshire Access Forum and liaise with the access officer for Inverclyde and North Ayrshire encouraging and implementing responsible access.

3.02 Regional Park Visitor Numbers

Vehicle, people and door counters are located strategically around the Regional Park, they provide a useful monitoring and management tool. Weather conditions remain the main reason for the variation in numbers.

Site Visitor Numbers

From April 2012 visitor figures have been reported to Visitscotland and others as the number of visitors per site, as outlined below, based on car counter data and observational records.

Site Visitor Numbers by Financial Year:-

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Castle Semple	339,903	346,464	344,694
Muirshiel	35,721	34,444	34,221
Greenock Cut	45,547	60,926	67,560
Lunderston Bay	185,478	173,652	198,695
Total	606,649	615,486	645,170

Overall, visitor numbers across the Regional Park are increasing, to nearly six hundred and fifty thousand visitors a year.

There was a 4.8% increase in visitors in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14 when there was a 1.5% increase on 2012/13.

3.03 Visitor Centre Numbers

The numbers of people using the three Visitor Centres in the Regional Park is recorded using door, manual counters and income figures.

Castle Semple: Numbers into Visitor Centre:-

Month	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
January	5,211	4,845	4773	4513	3824	3190
February	5,178	5,872	4898	6341	3966	4972
March	6,816	6,410	7741	5446	6054	5094
April	10,469	10,595	8929	7657	9071	
May	9,479	6,919	10379	7387	7169	
June	8,390	6,473	7574	9747	8734	
July	7,252	13,133	9347	10931	10250	
August	9,436	7,671	9733	9205	7363	
September	7,423	5,828	6400	6156	7912	
October	5,864	5,227	6846	4832	5025	

November	4,051	4,482	4403	4128	5501	
December	3,059	2,972	3666	3111	2859	
Totals	82,628	80,427	84,689	79,454	77,728	

Centre Open daily, closed on 25.12 and 1.1 annually.

Muirshiel: Numbers into Visitor Centre:-

Month	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
January	278*	434*	387*	370*	254*	245*
February	302*	345*	467*	311*	228*	335*
March	365*	359*	622*	486*	377*	219*
April	1,410	1,735	1,299	1,343	1252	
May	1,676	878	1,075	1,023	921	
June	1,094	769	1,208	867	544	
July	1,362	640	1,335	1,275	507	
August	1,920	0	1,383	973	820	
September	1,082	317	700	1,436	901	
October	1,079	485	926	701	478	
November	301*	246*	179*	343*	295*	
December	25*	115*	263*	129*	280*	
Totals	10,894	6,323	9,844	9,257	6,857	

*weekend opening only

Summer 2011 water supply problem: centre closed 7-20, 28 -31 July, 1 – 31 Aug, 1– 21 Sept.

Winter 2010 & 11 heavy snowfalls restricted access due to road conditions.

Greenock Cut: Numbers into Visitor Centre:-

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
January	189*	355*	210*	254*	172*	199*
February	255*	327*	156*	336*	224*	277*
March	301*	269*	263*	398*	261*	168*
April	1,700	1,516	771	1,007	1,075	
May	1,559	969	1,071	1,124	609	
June	1,290	850	872	788	1,117	
July	1,091	1,828	854	1240	966	
August	1,686	1,130	910	964	818	
September	1,070	2,930	627	910	1,638	
October	830	478	634	481	351	
November	145*	202*	208*	162*	300*	
December	15*	27*	132*	104*	64*	
Totals	10,131	10,881	6,708	7,768	6,938	

*weekend opening only.

3.04 Activities

The Park continues to develop its range of accessible outdoor recreational activities. No more so than in the field of accessible sport including cycling.

This year saw the Park organise and run its most ambitious event to date. The event was named Race2thegames and involved participants in special access dinghies taking part in a passage race from Greenock to Pacific Quay in Glasgow as part of the build up to Glasgow's Commonwealth Games.

On the day 13 teams took part in the 33km race from James Watt Docks in Greenock to the Glasgow Science Centre. They were aided by 10 support boats.

Measures of success were included as an integral part of this event and the results showed our biggest ever improvement in profile, income generation and social media traffic by a single event. For more detailed information (see section 7.04).

3.05 Access Initiatives

Park staff continues to offer assistance and advice to the various access forums and groups as they develop.

The Ladymuir and Locherwood access routes continue to be extremely popular. The link path through Ladymuir continues to get waterlogged over the winter months.

Once again we have built on our partnership with 'Pawsitive Action' who continues to provide training and advice on responsible dog ownership at both Muirshiel and Castle Semple Visitor Centres.

Several new Geocache sites have been added to the growing number situated throughout the Regional Park with staff providing advice on their co-ordinates as per the new 'Geocaching Policy', as required.

With the continuing extreme winter weather conditions the lochshore path has been severely undermined and the surface has been completely lost in some areas. It no longer is accessible by wheelchair or mobility scooter.

The Outdoor Activities Team has continued to develop access for participants with additional support needs to a wide range of Activities. Primarily with specialised sailing craft, we now have a fleet of 8 Hansa 303 dinghies as well as seating support systems for all crafts.

Following consultation Meetings and online communications a new constituted community cycling club was set up during 2014 and is called 'Ride 63' The principal aim of this group to develop cycle routes and participation in all types of cycling. The club will work with the Park to develop accessible cycling activities. Early in 2015 through Awards for All, the Park purchased a variety of hand cycles and trikes.

3.06 Semple Trail Heritage Project

Susan Paterson left the Project Officer position in the summer of 2014 and coordination of the project was by Kate Cuthbert (Access Officer) until the appointment of Jamie Gardyne in 2015.

The WoW project delivered five workshops using digital cameras to 471 children and general talks to a further 562 pupils. A total of 37 talks were given to groups with an audience of 1049 people. Facebook remained popular with 459 likes while 60 wildlife videos were posted on Youtube and on average had 40 to 100 views and the highest having 2030 views. In total 555 people attended a range of events with 218 hours contributed to the project through volunteers collecting and editing footage.

A path was completed at the RSPB centre along the Aird Meadow Trail. Work commenced to raise the footpath between the RSPB and the Calder Bridge. Writing of interpretation for panels and the booklet was completed and panels and interpretive installations were constructed at six of the lookouteries. Due to the additional costs the proposed pond creation at Blackditch Bay was cancelled. Work to remove Japanese Knotweed, renew the fishing platform is planned for 2015. Contractors are due to complete the rebuild of the wall in April 2015.

3.07 Recreation Events

The Park develops and delivers a range of recreational events, devised by Rangers, Activity staff and others. The Park is also a resource utilised by outside agencies i.e. Local Authority Outdoor Education units, Sports Development units, colleges, schools, and youth groups.

There was a novel change to the Park's photographic competition this year where, in order to link with the 'Year of Home Coming 2014', photographers were invited to submit their images online and have them go to public vote via the Park's Facebook page. Over 200 images were submitted over the course of the year with the themes of Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn. Once the competition came to a close the winning images, plus a selection of the most voted for images, were put into a display which then toured the Parks Visitor Centres.

Walking events this year included the annual 'Pound and Pace' charity walk of the Greenock Cut in June and the Renfrewshire Active Weekend Walk to Castle Semple in August with 47 participants raising over £400 for a local kidney dialysis charity.

Greenock Cut Centre hosted the Scottish Western Thoroughbred Vehicle Club meeting with 50 plus vintage cars parked onsite. The event was advertised via press releases and attracted over 300 people to come and take a look at the old cars. The event was a success and the group have already booked for the summer of 2015.

Rangers led over 880 participants in Health Walks across the Park.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is now included in school curriculum and as a result the Park facilitates this Award and has also developed the provision of this Award as part of the services it provides.

846 DofE participants were recorded using the Park this year.

The Park hosts a number of active watersports clubs who run regattas, training sessions and provide social as well as sporting opportunities to all ages. Castle Semple Rowing Regatta on 14 June was once again the largest club regatta in Scotland. The Ranger Service worked alongside the regatta organisers to facilitate a successful event.

In partnership with Paisley's Coats Observatory, six popular stargazing nights were hosted at Muirshiel Visitor Centre with 114 participants.

ROAR (Reaching Older Adults Renfrewshire) clubs now have a subgroup based in Lochwinnoch a total of 11 sessions have taken place with 69 participants.

The Windows on Wildlife project (see section 7.06) is contributing to the events programme with wildlife watching opportunities and public presentations, supported by its wonderful wildlife images on-line.

3.08 Sports Club Developments

The watersports clubs at Castle Semple have, with the support of the Park Authority, have been successful in forming the Semple Sports Access Partnership (SSAP). The partnership, now a charity is in the process of seeking funding to develop club facilities at Castle Semple.

There has been no further progress on the new building to date however the Park is continuing to work with SSAP and it is envisaged that some building works will start in 2015.

3.09 'Branching Out'; Mental Health Programme

'Branching Out' is a treatment model for clients with mental illness developed by NHS Boards in Scotland with the Forestry Commission and financially supported by the Scottish Government. It uses facilitated activity programmes in the countryside to improve the mental health and well-being of participants diagnosed as suffering mental ill-health.

During the year the Park delivered three 'Branching Out' programmes with financial support from the Forestry Commission and two with support from SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) Inverclyde branch. These programmes have been very successful based on retention rates, feedback from participants and the views of the health professionals who accompany them. Participants have written:

“Had a brilliant time doing the Branching Out course. The people in the group were fantastic. The Park Rangers are great and they have been so helpful and do a great job. Being outside really helps your mental health and the Country Park is gorgeous. I have learned so much and done things I never imagined I could do. I have had a wonderful time and have met great people. I would recommend the Branching Out course to everyone. Brilliant.”

The results of testing also show improvements in parameters of physical health e.g. blood pressure, weight loss, lung function and improved sleep. Health professionals have reported improvements in social networking and social skills.

Branching Out participants who complete eight sessions or more achieve the Discovery Level John Muir Award. This national award is an achievement recognising their continued personal and professional development.

As the result of increased confidence gained on Branching Out programmes, participants have gone on to gain qualifications, volunteer, pursue new interests and establish their own walking groups.

The Park has actively embraced the SAMH peer mentor programme which involves past participants returning to programmes in a supportive and voluntary role, aiding both the delivery of the programme and the participants themselves. The increased responsibility of this role, and the individuals' willingness to share their knowledge of wild places with new participants, contributes towards the mentors achieving the Explorer Level of the John Muir Award.

Notable successes have included peer mentor Aileen being recognised as a SAMH 'Get Active' case study whilst at Branching Out, resulting in her meeting the Ambassador for the programme, Sir Chris Hoy. Also Isobel from the RAMH group in December 2014 went on to win the National Branching Out Photographic Competition, meaning her whole group returned to Muirshiel to share the prize of a day out with a professional photographer. This is the second year in a row the winner of this competition has come from a Clyde Muirshiel group.

Park staff have benefitted from further training on dementia awareness so that this client group can now be incorporated in the development of the programme.

One member of the Countryside Ranger team has also been involved in aiding the Branching Out Programme Manager in the development and delivery of the new Branching Out Champions (Assistants) Course and the Branching Out Leaders Course. This has provided income for the Park and profile raising amongst other delivery partners.

Rangers delivered 1337 branching out sessions across the Park.

4.0 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

4.01 Biodiversity projects and Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP's)

The Park staff continue to implement actions in the Ayrshire and Renfrewshire (which includes Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire) Action Plans.

- Monitoring of birds of prey such as hen harriers and other important birds was undertaken. Eight sites were monitored for peregrines. Although, there were two breeding peregrines both sites failed and so no young were fledged. Seabirds and wetland birds were counted as part of national initiatives.
- In the Special Protection Area, although there were sightings of hen harriers, no breeding birds were recorded.
- Volunteers and work experience students from the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) Paisley have contributed a variety of reports including surveys for reptiles at Muirshiel and Greenock Cut.
- Although funding is now completed for the Cample Burn juniper restoration project, it is planned that propagation and planting of juniper at this site will continue until the target of one thousand shrubs is achieved.
- Volunteers from Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Auchincruive and UWS Paisley have planted out juniper at the Cample Burn while regular volunteer groups have been weeding and potting up the juniper cuttings.
- For the sixth consecutive year, volunteers were involved in clearing willow herb from the site near Barnbrock to prevent spignel from being out competed on the 240 metre embankment. As well the spignel flourishing, the site has become more bio diverse due to the reduction in shade.
- Some of the spignel from the polytunnel at Barnbrock has been planted out at Barnbrock to provide a seed source. Spignel is an LBAP species.
- Following the discovery of the invasive non-native weed, *Crassula helmsii*, sites close to Castle Semple Loch have been monitored. There has been no re-occurrence of *Crassula* at Castle Semple Loch.
- The Windows on Wildlife Project has, through its educational and event programmes, contributed to a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity and LBAP species (see section 7.06).
- Continued monitoring for Osprey has taken place as these birds are being increasingly seen at Castle Semple and Loch Thom. All sightings being reported to the regional recorder. In anticipation of their future nesting within the Park, all nest platforms were checked in early spring prior to their arrival. As yet no confirmed nests have been established within the Park.
- Greenock Cut Ranger staff and Volunteers conducted a number of wildlife surveys including WeBS, butterfly and reptile surveys with data being contributed to ongoing national surveys and rare sightings including the Pied Billed Grebe spotted in February and March.
- A wildflower area has been created at Greenock Cut which has successfully been attracting bees and butterflies as well compliments from visitors. It is planned to incorporate this new flower patch into a story telling area.
- "Swallowcam" continues to be popular at Greenock Cut Visitor Centre.
- The volunteer work program has contributed to trees being planted at GCVC as well as areas of bracken being managed.
- BTO monthly wildfowl counts were carried out at Fairlie Bay, North Ayrshire with records forwarded to the national database.

Butterfly surveys and walks in partnership with the Butterfly Conservation Society have again taken place this summer as well as bumblebee surveys.

We ceased our contribution to the national squirrel pox survey in April of this year due to other commitments. However the information collected enabled likely route of their spread into Parkhill wood to be established. This information was forwarded to the Scottish Wildlife Trust who funded the project.

4.02 Woodland Plans

At Muirshiel Country Park the first phase of improvements has been completed and there will be a rest period until 2015/16 to encourage species development. A grant application to SRDP and a felling license will be submitted in autumn 2015.

Work by estate squad and rangers/volunteers to continue removal of rhododendrons and self sown sitka. Maintenance work included saplings.

4.03 Water Quality at Castle Semple Loch

At Castle Semple Loch (part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest) the Park Authority has monitored water quality in detail since 1997. The loch has a eutrophic standard of water quality with relatively high levels of total phosphate and chlorophyll-a. As part of the ongoing water quality management of Castle Semple Loch, Park staff continued the programme of sampling throughout the summer of 2014, recording, reporting and implementing action on water quality.

Since 1997 water quality has improved at Castle Semple Loch and the main area of the loch (middle site) is of a high standard in terms of microbiology. The loch does have occasional algal blooms that may be potentially toxic. Management protocols are in place to ensure public safety. These include informing Environmental Health, briefing staff, posting warning notices around the loch and at the centre.

Monitoring of water quality is required to assist the safe operation of water based activities and is also an important determinant of biodiversity. A full report on water quality parameters is presented to the Park Authority annually.

4.04 Volunteers

Volunteers continue to make a major contribution to biodiversity and nature conservation in the Park. Many of the tasks they achieve e.g. control of invasive species, establishment of native species and development of habitats are identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Volunteers are discussed further in Education and Understanding (section 7.02).

1267 volunteers provided 3768 hours worth of work across the park (equivalent to 2 full time people). Volunteer work programmes are planned 3 months in advance and advertised so people can pick and choose which sessions they wish to attend. The majority of the volunteers are regular attendees, when asked to summarise why they volunteer and what they get from it said –

“By volunteering I have gained new skills in wildlife/species ID from reptiles, birds, butterflies, mammals and many more. From taking part in survey work with the rangers, I have not only helped collect the data for the Park and other organisations but have improved my own skills and developed new ones to help identify species”.

“No matter what the weather is like, volunteering with the Rangers you will always learn new skills from them”.

Our various volunteer groups continue to make a huge contribution to biodiversity and nature conservation in the Park. They have been involved in control of invasive species, wild flower meadow creation, blueberry protection, tree planting and maintenance and surveying.

5.0 Landscape and Built Heritage

5.01 Renewable Energy

There is considerable wind resource across the Park and as a result much commercial pressure to build windfarms in and adjacent to the Park.

Large scale windfarms are operating within or on the boundary of the Regional Park at Ardrossan which has 12 turbines, Wardlaw Wood and Millour Hill (14), Kelburn (14), Hunterston Test Facility (3). There are, in addition, smaller turbines located at Murdieston Farm (2), Cornalees Farm (1), Shielhill (1), Kelly Mains (2) and Finnockbog (2).

Developers have proposed the construction of a windfarm of 10 turbines on Corlic Hill, Inverclyde where a previous application was refused after public inquiry in 2007. An application for 5 turbines at Blackshaw, North Ayrshire, has been submitted.

The Park Authority has supported applications, in the 20-30 metre range, where the impacts on the Regional Park have been assessed to be acceptable. Each application continues to be considered on its merits and the criteria the Park Authority uses to form its opinion are consistent in the face of this increased complexity of proposals.

The Park Authority also considers and responds to applications outside of the Park boundary where these might result in unacceptable impacts on the Park.

5.02 Monitoring of Planning Applications

Staff continue to respond to planning applications and scoping reports in or adjacent to the Park. We have responded to scoping reports and consultations on a variety of developments including wind turbine proposals and forestry proposals.

6.0 Tourism

6.01 Tourism Partnerships

The Park Authority continued to be represented at board level at the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA) in 2014/15 gaining intelligence and access to key players and training within the Scottish Tourism industry.

The Park maintained contact with European organisations through Europarc Atlantic Isles (EAI), the English speaking section within the federation of European Parks. EAI contacts have been used to influence the IUCN to consider reinstating the Park's Category V Protected Area Status.

The Park Authority contributes to the Local Area Tourism Partnerships in Inverclyde, works with the Ayrshire wide Tourism Team on matters of relevance taking advantage of opportunities for joint marketing, promotion, training, communication and networking where these helped to meet Park Strategy objectives. Membership and input to the activities of Wild Scotland, and Discover Inverclyde continues.

6.02 Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor ("STEAM")

The STEAM report is produced annually, giving information on the economic impacts of tourism within a given area. The report's authors calculate tourist numbers and expenditure from both overnight and day visitors. Since 2001 there has been a STEAM report for the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park influence area.

No STEAM data has been received for 2014. The most recent STEAM report shows there were approximately 1.23 million tourist days in 2013 to the Park area. The economic impact was £69.21 million in 2013 for the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park influence area.

6.03 Retail and Catering

Income from retail and catering at Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park is directly related to visitor footfall through the Park centres which in turn is largely affected by the weather (though other factors can have an influence). Castle Semple is by far the most important visitor centre as regards income generation, with catering greatly exceeding retail in importance at all centres across the Park.

Retail has been a challenging sector throughout the country in recent years and visitor retail spend in the Park has been falling year on year. Even with the increased turnover from a stock clearance, the Retail income target set by the Park Authority was not met. Conversely Catering turnover exceeded its target by 1.7%. However, when combined, Retail and Catering turnover was 2.4% below the target set.

The figures below show a continuing net loss year on year in the retail and catering section of the Park:-

Income Year	Salaries	Spend	Income	Deficit (+)/ Surplus (-)
2010/11	103438	80184	177813	5809
2011/12	107655	81643	171922	17376
2012/13	103498	82499	173871	12076
2013/14	101448	80763	170287	11924
2014/15	97553	91297	171916	16934

This may be in part due to no funds being available to develop and improve the potential of the Park's retail and catering operations. Again with reduced resources available to the Park these losses cannot be sustained.

6.04 Marketing and Promotional Activity

The major promotional activity of 2014 was 'Race2thegames' when 13 boats helmed by children and adults with additional support needs raced a challenging 33km from Greenock to Glasgow creating a spectacular flotilla of colourful Hansa 303 class dinghies. The event had a dedicated website, twitter with event hashtag and facebook page. On the day Wednesday 2 July, just three weeks before the Commonwealth Games were hosted in Glasgow three film crews including BBC Alba and STV Glasgow covered the race, with the event being reported on prime time evening TV on the same day. The event also received press and online media coverage which also supports the profile of the Regional Park.

This event and the sailors in particular inspired others in their schools and community groups to try sailing or progress their skills resulting in a 50% increase in accessible sailing in 2014 at Castle Semple Centre.

The Windows on Wildlife Project Officer Hayley Douglas became the 'Wildlife Expert' on STV Glasgow's primetime evening programme called the 'Riverside Show'. This has provided the Park with a regular television profile focusing primarily on wildlife and conservation activities both within the Regional Park but equally at other wildlife locations in West Central Scotland.

The Park has also supported content for BBC Radio Scotland 'Out-of-Doors', the Fred McCauley Show and Inverclyde Radio.

The Park produced a quality seasonal "What's on" for both summer and winter. The summer edition had a print run of 15,000. The winter publication had a print run of 5 000.it is a timely reminder that the countryside is open throughout the year.

The "What's on" publications are now in their thirteenth year and are supported by posters, website listings and social media activities. A new format will be investigated for the 2015/16 season.

Social media channels: Facebook, Twitter and You Tube continue and are used to communicate with Park users and promote Park activities. By March 2015 there were 1100 'likes' on Facebook and 900 'followers' on Twitter. The videos on You Tube have been viewed over 16,000 times.

Profiles were created on TripAdvisor for each Park site and the Regional Park as a whole. They give management updates when a review is posted and the ability to comment on that review. Examples for the period include:-

*Beautiful spot great Castle Semple: "The jewel in Renfrewshire's crown" ***** walks, the centre cafe makes great lattie coffee good selection of goodies to eat, a nice easy walk from there to the bird sanctuary about a mile great for walking a dog clean underfoot, only hazard is occasional lycra clad cyclist flying along with no bell!!*

*Lunderston Bay: "Love this place" ***** just went for a walk, ended up here. There is not a lot going on during the winter months but just a great place to get the wind in your face. I noticed that new toilets have been built ready for the summer months. The Beach is pretty cool when at low tide. Play area for kids and walking trail to Inverkip Marina. Not much more to say, just love and adore this place winter or summer...*

Visit the website at www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk
or follow us on www.twitter.com/clydemuirshiel,
like us at www.facebook.com/clydemuirshielregionalpark

6.05 Visitor Sites: Customer Facilities

Lunderston Bay

2014 saw the opening of the much awaited and much appreciated new toilet block and attendant office at Lunderston. The results are obvious with the increase in visitors to the site. Our thanks to Inverclyde Council for these new facilities.

Visitor Centre opening hours remained the same as last year within the Park with the smaller centres closing on weekdays over the winter.

Visitor numbers were up in Inverclyde and down in Renfrewshire compared to 2013/14 at two sites were up and at one site they were down. For further consideration of the variation in visitor numbers (see section 3.02).

6.06 Events

The Outdoor Activity team host events for national organisations like the Scottish Coastal Rowing Association and the Scottish Canoe Association.

The Ranger Service hosted meetings and workshops for diverse groups including the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council Group, Glasgow Airport fire crew and Pawsitive Action.

Our events programme throughout the year is a diverse mix of activities aimed at all age groups but we do have a targeted summer programme for children during the school holidays.

The bigger events bring in new visitors to the area increasing the economic benefits to the local businesses. These annual events include the Castle Semple Rowing Regatta, the Classic Car event and those in partnership with other organisations such as the Butterfly Conservation Society, Bat walks and Pawsitive Action dog training events.

The Semple Clan Gathering took place again this year with participants from all over the world attending. Doors Open Day enabled visitors to access the tower at Castle Semple and learn a little local history.

The PDSA ran a free health drop-in event for local dog owners; there was a Waggity Walk for dogs and their owners. Our ever popular Star Gazing nights run were by the Paisley Observatory staff at Muirshiel.

Over 130 events took place this year in the Park, either run or facilitated by the ranger service a total of 7142 participants. The green wood working events continue to be a popular draw with an opportunity for the general public to 'have a go' themselves. Windows on Wildlife walks remain popular with over 400 participants.

6.07 Online Activities

Park Website

In 2014 there were 145,691 visits to the website by 73,000 unique visitors; this is compared to 137,633 visits by 70,000 visitors respectively in 2013. Trends in visits increase with the seasons, culminating in 8700 visits in July 2014.

The three most viewed pages are: 'courses', 'Park sites' and 'things to do'. The 3 most downloaded files are 'price list', 'Castle Semple Loch Management Plan' and 'History of Castle Semple Estate'.

There was increased use of the "blogs" facility, which comprises short, often illustrated news items. There is a similar "news" section which is used for the more formal information such as announcements and press releases.

6.08 Largs Information Bureau

This local initiative, in a converted shop in the Main Street, provides community and visitor advice services. The Park has again, purchased a section of the front window display for Park promotion. This is good value for money and demonstrates partnership. The Park was advertised for 12 months of the year during 2014-15.

6.09 Campsite

During 2014-15 our campsite maintained the 2 star rating, awarded by Visit Scotland. The sun shone during the 2014 Commonwealth Games period and our normally quiet campsite was filled, to capacity, with visitors to Scotland's Games. The site capacity was increased, temporarily, during the Games period, to help meet the demand for camping within travelling distance of the Commonwealth venues.

Throughout the Games period the atmosphere on the campsite was extraordinary, with our staff commenting on the camaraderie amongst the visitors. Camaraderie which was sorely tested when many of them had to put up with a 6 hour long power cut (reported by Scottish Power to have been caused by vandalism to the power lines). Despite this, many of our visitors expressed their enjoyment of the site and their intention of returning.

User numbers are presented below:-

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Camping Bed nights	208	177	162	291	371
Shieling Bed nights	67	363	74	37	65
Youth Group Bed nights	804	1465	755	633	586
Youth Groups	24	32	29	20	21
Income £	5,817	9,303	11,551	6,780	8,803

However it should be noted that the estimated cost for servicing the campsite was in excess of £13,000. This covers Staff £10,160, Consumables £150, Rates & Water £700 and Estimated Electricity £2100.

This excludes costs for repairs & maintenance.

7.0 Education and Understanding

7.01 Ranger Events

The Park Ranger Service continues to provide a varied programme of activities throughout the year aimed at all ages to encourage visitors to make fuller use of the wider countryside, learn new skills and meet new people.

All of the events are advertised in the biannual “What’s on” guides as well as making use of social media and Park website.

3110 people took advantage of the 82 Ranger led events based within the Park. These included rock pooling events, Easter craft workshop, science fun days, several survey walks (butterfly, bees and bats).

In partnership with Clyde Orienteering, Greenock Cut Visitor Centre (GCVC) hosted a Scottish Regional Orienteering event with participants visiting from as far afield as Cumbria and Aberdeenshire. Over the course of the day 244 runners were out, making their way around the hills surrounding the Greenock Cut Centre.

8 model boat events took place at Castle Semple with 255 participants; the 12 Windows on Wildlife events attracted 429 participants with the 12 Semple Trail Heritage events involving 137 members of the public.

96 people took the opportunity to take part in the GCVC summer events. These events were tried and tested popular events from previous years. They included rockets, pond dipping, GPS treasure hunt and rock pooling.

Working in collaboration with a local vintage car club, Scottish Western Thoroughbred Vehicle Club, GCVC hosted its first ever car event with approximately 50 vintage cars stopping at the centre for the public to enjoy. They attracted a considerable crowd with an estimated 300 plus people on site at its busiest.

Facilitated events at Castle Semple included a Castle Semple Rowing Club Regatta attracting over 800 people.

The partnership with Paisley Observatory continues to attract visitors to gaze at the night skies over Muirshiel Country Park. 114 people made the trips into the hills to listen to lectures and to make use of telescopes and binoculars.

Doors Open Day at Greenock Cut this year was delivered in conjunction with the Inverclyde Tourist Group. Using a small bus ITG picked up the 21 participants in Greenock and treated them to an audio tour around Greenock before arriving at GCVC to enjoy a powerpoint presentation from the Rangers and getting a guided walk along a section of “The Cut”. At Castle Semple 89 participants took part, with a visit to the visitor centre tower and an exhibition on Castle Semple from an historical viewpoint up until present day use.

7.02 Volunteers

One of our longstanding volunteers at GCVC Katie McMillan gained her Saltire Summit Award and is now employed as a seasonal ranger in Ayrshire.

Once again in 2014/15 there was an increase in the number of volunteer groups and individuals giving up their time to volunteer both at Castle Semple and Muirshiel Centres.

Several corporate groups plan to come on an annual basis to contribute towards their local community, working mainly on alien species control (rhododendron, sitka spruce and Himalayan balsam) other activities included path maintenance, pond clearance, tree planting, hedge laying, painting, dry stone walling and wildlife surveys.

We had two Xchange Scotland volunteer groups this year, an all French student group in September as well as a mixed nationality group in July. This second group resulted from previous participants positive feedback reports.

A total of 3768 volunteer hours were contributed to projects within the Regional Park during 2014/15.

The Thursday adult group is increasing steadily in numbers as is our Duke of Edinburgh youth group with those attending working their way from bronze, through silver to the gold awards.

Our regular “assisted needs” groups are continuing to help landscape around the centre areas and “Community Networks” have applied to do their John Muir Discovery Award at Muirshiel Centre. They will be constructing a quiet area in a woodland setting for reflection and contemplation. They will be involved in the design and planning of the project as well as its execution. They need to record their progress and report and share information at the end of it to earn their award. New Directions group applied for the Saltire Award.

We still work with Flexi-care, Intensive Support group, Leverndale Hospital, Spinners Gate and Kintyre Base providing them with a targeted programme of volunteering specifically designed for their abilities.

We provided placements for two students from University West of Scotland who came for eleven weeks to carry out a vegetation survey at Muirshiel. Kilmarnock College, Scottish Agricultural College and Scotlands Rural College students carried out rhododendron cutting and burning in Parkhill wood. Green Gym and Scottish Enterprise also continued this work.

Whilst the Park Authority is committed to the principle that the primary beneficiary of volunteering should be the volunteer, the Park Authority is also grateful to all our volunteers for their help in conserving the natural beauty of the Regional Park.

7.03 Work with Schools

Environmental education continues to be one of the Ranger Service's main outputs with nearly 5,000 people taking advantage of this service (5528 in 2013). This reduction is directly due to the decrease in Ranger staff within the Park, from 10.5 to 7.26 FTE.

The Ranger Service provides educational experiences directly linked to the Curriculum for Excellence for all school pupils. The subjects covered a range of activities from building bug hotels and bat boxes to willow weaving and map skills.

The formal education programme also includes Eco School visits where the Ranger Service is involved with practical conservation tasks within the school grounds such as establishing wild flower meadows or giving advice to the schools eco committees.

The majority of the visits to Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park are by local pre-school and primary school children learning about the natural environment.

The Park provided work experience placements to high school students. The students got to work alongside the Ranger Service on a day to day basis getting involved with a variety of Ranger tasks.

7.04 Activities

The Park continues to provide an extensive programme of courses, including kayaking, sailing, canoeing, powerboating, cycling, and multi-activity courses, principally at Castle Semple.

This year the Park organised and ran its most ambitious event to date. The event was named Race2thegames and involved participants in special access dinghies taking part in a passage race, from Greenock to Pacific Quay in Glasgow, as part of the build up to Glasgow's Commonwealth Games.

On the day, 13 teams took part in the 33km race from James Watt Docks in Greenock to the Glasgow Science Centre. They were supported by 10 support boats.

Measures of success were included as an integral part of this event and the results showed our biggest ever improvement in Profile, Income generation and Social media traffic by a single event.

The measures of success were:

- 240 children & young people from 10 schools and organisations took part in pre-event training.
- 39 competitors from 13 teams. 10 support crew boats from far and wide.
- Value of pre-event training to the Park was £23,000.
- Value of training in FY 2014/2015 to the Park was around £110,000.
- Value of corporate donations to Race2thegames was £5650.
- £1,345 was raised in an online auction.
- £10,000 donated by Inverclyde Council.

- In the months February-July there were more visits to the CMRP website each month compared to the same time last year.
- The R2tg website was established.
- In the 2 months leading up to the event the Race2thegames Facebook page increased its likes by 62%.
- R2tg and CMRP featured in a BBC Alba documentary aired in the autumn. R2tg featured on STV Glasgow's Riverside Show and the Daily Record website as well as many local newspapers such as The Paisley Daily Express, Inverclyde Telegraph and the Cumnock Chronicle. All of the press coverage was extremely positive.

This event realised over £180,000 in the form of training programme provision, donations and equipment.

This event and its pre – training directly influenced, and continue to influence the participant figures for activities within the Park.

For the year a simplified measure is being used as per table below:-

	2013/14	2014/15
Mainstream Taster/multi activity course places	1649	1948
Additional Support Needs (ASN) Junior taster/multi activity places	1101	2085
ASN Adult taster/multi activity places	242	274
Mainstream school multi activity places	863	829
Places on the accessible powerboat	208	201
Coaching course places across all disciplines	507	571
Total places provided	4570	5908

As can be seen from the table above we have had a 16% increase in the number of non-school groups taking part in the multi activity option, this is by far the most popular option booked with us as it offers the most flexibility and can be tailored to the requirements of the groups. The school bookings are static and this is an area that we will develop over the coming years.

The main area of growth with a 47% jump is the work with the ASN schools. This has proved extremely popular particularly since the vast majority of the schools have received funding either through the 2014 Celebrate fund or Awards for All to support them. The success of obtaining funding was primarily due to the Race2thegames event which allowed us to generate publicity around disability sport for young people and consequently generate interest from the schools resulting in the long term programmes that are now running. This is expected to continue to grow over the coming years, with some groups already into their second funded programme.

We also engaged with new ASN schools that were not part of the Race2thegames project but have heard about it and the sports programmes on offer. We are working with these additional schools to secure funding for more long term programmes.

In addition to the junior programmes we are working with Spinal Injuries Scotland and have secured funding for 40 days of activity for people with spinal injuries, many of whom will come to us from the Queen Elizabeth Spinal Unit in Glasgow as part of the rehab process in the unit. Alongside SIS we continue to develop links with day care and other support services across our region. The bulk of this work will start from April 2015.

We have continued to increase the number of sail and paddle powered craft to cope with the increased demand in disability sport.

This has been largely helped by funding from various sources that has allowed us to purchase additional sailing dinghies, seating systems and a wide range of hand cycles and trikes. Cycling development has been warmly welcomed by both junior and adult groups as a great addition to the accessible sport on offer. We now have regular rides with the Ride 63 cycle club for our adult hand cyclists and the ASN schools make use of the bikes on days where weather would curtail any water activity.

We obtained funding to develop new seating systems, hand function aids and neck support for the sailing dinghies, canoes and kayaks in partnership with Equal Adventure. This is intended to be an ongoing area of development as we identify the equipment needs of our clients with more complex challenges.

7.04.1 Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme

The Park became an approved activity provider for the DofE scheme in 2014. The impetus for which was due to the number of requests we received from schools to assistance them in providing elements of the award. A number of Park staff have been working towards becoming DofE assessors and expedition supervisors over the winter of 2014, to meet the expected demand in 2015. This work is expected to be another growth area over the coming years with regular enquiries coming in from mainstream and ASN schools to provide expedition and other elements of the scheme.

7.04.2 Coaching Awards

There was a small but steady increase in the number of people undertaking certified courses in powerboating, sailing and paddle sports; this was mainly due to an increase in the number of UKCC coaching courses at level 1 and 2 that were offered at the centre.

7.04.3 New Accessible Powerboat

We have been working with the Wheelieboat Trust and the Rotary Club of Gryffe Valley to fund a new larger version of the current drop ramp powerboat. There is an ever increasing demand for powerboat trips especially from care homes and day centres from 5 local authority areas. The current boat is already running at capacity (as can be seen from the participation figures) so there is a real need for a second boat. The design was finalised over winter 14/15 and the boat will be in service for April 2015 enabling us to offer significantly increased capacity.

The results of the initiatives by the Activities and Ranger Service can be seen in the income figures below:-

Income Year	Salaries	Spend	Income	Deficit (+)/ Surplus (-)
2010/11	105729	21626	128391	-1035
2011/12	107515	16353	126468	-2418
2012/13	118652	30601	137644	11610
2013/14	118438	28991	146386	1043
2014/15	134764	34855	250297	-82312

As can be seen income in this area has produced a significant surplus. Continuing this in these challenging times will continue only if resources continue to improve mainly in the form of infrastructure.

7.05 Hen Harriers

We had no nesting hen harriers again this year at Muirshiel.

7.06 Windows on Wildlife (WoW)

The 'Windows on Wildlife' (WoW) project aimed to develop and promote natural heritage using events and featuring camera and other imaging technologies to enhance wildlife viewing. The WoW project was funded for two years, from the 1 October 2012 to the 30 September 2014 and was based at Castle Semple Visitor Centre. This project was part of the Semple Trail Heritage Project.

School workshops were delivered between April and June 2014 to **16** primary school classes across 12 Renfrewshire Primary schools. Each class participated in five workshops and in total 80 workshops were delivered to **471** children. Each pupil was given the opportunity to take part in a class photography competition. This took place in the fourth lesson where the pupils put into practice the skills they had learned. Each pupil picked their best photograph and these were displayed in the final lesson with the winning photograph in each class being presented to the school and the pupil as a framed print.

Feedback from the schools was very positive with fourteen of the sixteen feedback forms from the teachers twelve scored the workshops at 10/10 and two at 9/10. Comments on the feedback form included "Some children now want to be photographers when they grow up" and "Parents have commented on children's new found enthusiasm". An additional, school week at Houston Primary the Project Officer delivered a mini photography workshop to all pupils from Nursery to Primary Seven. In total **562** pupils participated. The total number of school pupils that participated in photography workshops for the second year to **1,033**.

In total **1,049** people attended **27** different talks which involved showing the footage that has been collected by the motion cameras set up near Castle Semple. Some talks also included looking at animal tracks in the woods to see the animals that owls like to eat and this was followed by a session on dissecting owl pellets.

The project Facebook page, the main form of social media that the project used. At the end of the second year the page had attracted **459** 'likes' and at one stage **1,486** people were reached on the page. The posts were varied, from footage taken by the project cameras to photos taken by the school children.

YouTube was used to upload project videos with 60 videos being uploaded in the second year of the project. Most videos that were uploaded have had over 40-100 views through YouTube with two videos proving to be very popular with 2,030 and 738 views respectively. It is worth noting that at the end of the two year period for the project 602 hours and 23 minutes of footage were filmed.

The Clyde Muirshiel webpage was also used to deliver updates through blogs and through a dedicated news page. Monthly updates on the project were also reported in the village newspaper, Chatterbox and in the widely distributed Gryffe Advertiser. A blog has also appeared on Scottish Natural Heritage's website.

In the second year of the project **28** public events were organised and four external events were attended. The winter programme of events which started in October and ran to March consisted of 10 events that were well attended and attracted **185** visitors.

Volunteers were trained in the use of the motion cameras, siting of cameras, tracking, editing footage and animal behaviour identification. One student helped out at the first of the Big WoW Weekends and the other student spent her time carrying out a small mammal tracking survey in Parkhill Woods on top of editing footage. In total, **218** hours have been contributed by the volunteers to the project.

8.0 Management

8.01 Management Team

The Senior Management Team comprising the Interim Regional Park Manager (0.5 FTE), One Assistant Manager (0.7 FTE) and the Development & Marketing Officer (0.6 FTE) continues to manage the Park “day to day”, implementing Park Authority policy.

8.02 Consultative Forum

The Consultative Forum met once in the year, during June 2014.

8.03 Strategic Planning

The Park Strategy 2008-11 as adopted at the Park Authority meeting in December 2007 continues to be the main driving mechanism for activity within the Park. It was expected in 2014/15 that the review of the Park's governance and management would provide the direction required for a new Park Strategy. The delays in the review have resulted in no new Strategy being adopted so activity within the Park has continued to follow the aims of the old strategy.

The workplan for 2014/15 was followed wherever possible, given the reduced resources available to the park. However, the Park focused primarily on product/ service development and (wherever possible and appropriate) maximized income/ reduced expenditure within this remit.

A review of the Park's governance and management was approved by the Park Authority in December 2012. The review by consultants has, to a point, taken place with the main output being the requirement for a full further fundamental review of the Park. This would include the requirements and aspirations of the three Local Authority members and other stakeholders, to form and develop a funding and governance structure for the Park to enable the park to remain sustainable for many years to come, and to develop the reporting procedures required by the stakeholders based on a new Park Strategy.

8.04 Staff Establishment

At the end of 2013-14, in order to achieve savings targets, we reduced the number of establishment staff, one through Voluntary Early Retirement and one through Voluntary Redundancy.

During 2014-15, vacant posts were not filled, the number of Seasonal Rangers employed was reduced from 5 to 1 and, as a consequence, the number of Senior Ranger posts was reduced from 3 to 2. Further staffing efficiencies are planned for 2015-16 and beyond.

The staff totals (in Full Time Equivalents, FTE) for each team were:-

Team	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Management	3	2.55	2.95	3.1	1.8
Administration	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.5*	6.5*
Ranger	14.1	13.25	12.5	10.5*	7.26*
Activities	5.46	4.99	5.51	5.1	6.3
Visitor Services	5.14	6.56	6.91	7.2	6.55
Estates	3.86	3.86	3.02	3	2.65
Cleaning	2.88	3.33	3.25	3.18	3.57
~Project Officer	0.8	0.8	0.54	0.8	0.8
Total	40.74	40.84	40.18	38.84	35.43

* 0.5FTE DMO support & 0.5 FTE Countryside Office Support were previously counted as Rangers, now included in Administration FTE count.

The South Renfrewshire Access Network Initiative (SRANI) Project Officer funding ended during 2012, this post was partially funded by Renfrewshire Leader.

The Windows on Wildlife Project Officer commenced in 2012, this post was partially funded via Renfrewshire Leader and The Heritage Lottery Fund. Funding ended in September 2014.

8.05 Personnel Management

The personnel policies of the lead partner, Renfrewshire Council, continue to be applied.

8.06 Financial Management

The administration team supporting the senior management have continued to develop the systems for grant management and have assisted the Park Treasurer by further refining payroll phasing and other aspects of expenditure profiles. The use of a Corporate Purchasing Card and the online purchasing system 'Pecos' continue to assist in streamlining the Park's procurement process.

8.07 Health and Safety

The Park management continued to work to align Health and Safety policy and practices more closely with those of Renfrewshire Council, the servicing authority.

Nine Health and Safety training courses were attended.

Accident rates in the Park remain low with only minor injuries to 2 members of staff being recorded.

24 injuries to visitors were recorded and these were mainly from falls when cycling in the Park.

There were no RIDDOR reportable incidents or illnesses. These figures are very low given the 1.23 million visits annually to the Park and the range of activities taking place.

8.08 Incident Reports

Staff routinely monitors incidents using a system developed many years ago, although care should be taken when reading trends over time into the tables. The system complements other statutory reporting systems. The reports are available for review by the Senior Management Team on a weekly basis. A summary of this year's reports together with previous years' is:-

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Vandalism	26	17	22	14	12
Theft	4	6	5	4	2
Abandoned Vehicles	2	3	2	1	0
Fire/Alarm Call Out	11	4	5	5	0
Health & Safety (including injury)	23	36	29	38	57
Law & Country Code	26	24	25	22	16
Maintenance	12	27	12	12	12
Accident Assistance	13	8	4	2	4
Other	21	6	23	25	17
Totals	138	131	127	123	120

8.09 Feedback and Complaints

Formal written complaints by form, letter or email for the period break down as follows:

Lunderston Bay		
Storm Debris	6	(re storm of 3 Jan 2014)
Pot Holes	2	(repaired May 2014)
Toilet Opening Hours	2	
Poisonous Plants	1	
Barnbrock Campsite		
Condition of Facilities and Cleaning Standards	2	
Johnshill		
Double Parking Issue on Pavement	1	
Semple Trail		
Directional Signs	1	(Way marking installed Oct 2014)

8.10 Lunderston Bay

The new toilet facilities at Lunderston Bay were finally opened to the Public in time for the Easter Holidays. Feedback for the most part has been very positive. The increase in visitor figures would confirm this.

8.11 Park Authority

Cllr. Christopher Gilmour is the Chair of the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee. There have been 4 Joint Committee meetings and 2 meetings of the Consultative Forum in the period of this Annual Report and papers have been considered on:

Joint Committee:

6 June 2014

- Unaudited Annual Accounts 2013/14
- Annual Audit Plan 2013/14
- Development of the "Twiglets and Pips" Project
- The continuing development of Race2thegames
- Windows on Wildlife Project – Update
- Quarterly Health and Safety Report
- Quarterly Absence Statistics
- Review of Operations and Governance of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

12 September 2014

Uplands Project
Investigation and Development of Work Placements & Modern Apprenticeships within the Park.
Quarterly Absence Statistics
Quarterly Health and Safety Report
The Success of Race2thegames and its Legacy
Development of Pedal the Park Project
Partnership with Tourism and Environmental Organisations
Volunteer Development
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report
Updated Financial Regulations
Internal Audit Annual Report

28 November 2014

Quarterly Absence Statistics
Health and Safety Plan
Development of the new Mk 5 Wheelieboat
Pricing policy for Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park 2015 - 2016
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report
Audited Annual Accounts
Schedule of Meetings

20 February 2015

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report
Revenue Estimates 2015/16
Quarterly Absence Statistics
Quarterly Health and Safety Report
Simple Water Access iNitiative 2 (SWAN 2)
Review of Clyde Muirshiel Park

The Park Authority members and their supporting officers have been:

Cllr Christopher Gilmour	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Andy Doig	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Derek Bibby	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr John Caldwell	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Alex McLean	North Ayrshire Council
Cllr Anthea Dickson	North Ayrshire Council
Cllr David Wilson	Inverclyde Council
Cllr Innes Nelson	Inverclyde Council

Officers

Stuart McMillan	Renfrewshire Council
Martin McNab	Inverclyde Council
Audrey Sutton	North Ayrshire Council
Ewan Coventry	Renfrewshire Council
Sandra Black	Renfrewshire Council
Alison Fraser	Renfrewshire Council
Margaret Pickett	Inverclyde Council
Richard Henry	North Ayrshire Council
Cameron Sharp	North Ayrshire Council

9.0 Financial Performance Summary

The Park Authority is supported financially by the 3 founding Local Authorities; Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire Councils.

The extracts below exclude accounting adjustments relating to pensions, short term accumulating absences and accrued employee costs. With the exception of 2014-15, all extracts are from the Audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March, the extract from 2014-15 is from the unaudited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2015.

9.01 Expenditure

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Employee costs	980,492	1,002,025	1,030,524	864,549
Property costs	47,597	49,836	47,890	49,940
Supplies and Services	160,868	304,877	215,585	207,780
Contractors	20,698	21,155	12,368	17,590
Transport and Plant	56,284	73,325	74,540	63,855
Admin Costs	82,103	96,929	93,850	90,231
Payments to other Bodies	(569)	1,412	1,433	1,400
Total	1,347,473	1,549,559	1,476,190	1,295,345

9.02 Income

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Grants	0	(24,628)	(39,458)	(89,507)
Sales Fees & Charges (Activities income)	(138,539)	(152,671)	(138,093)	(133,088)
Retail & Catering	(171,922)	(173,887)	(171,685)	(171,916)
Miscellaneous	(26,100)	(153,610)	(85,622)	(21,693)
Requisition from member authorities	(1,057,900)	(1,039,900)	(1,022,200)	(857,500)
Total	(1,394,461)	(1,544,696)	(1,457,058)	(1,273,704)
(Surplus)/ Deficit	(46,988)	4,868	19,132	21,641

These figures show a reduction in cost per visitor to the unitary authorities from £1.60 in 2013 to 2014 to £1.33 in 2014 to 2015.

9.03 Annual Accounts

The Park management continues to reduce expenditure, principally through actions to reduce employee costs e.g. Voluntary Redundancy and/or Voluntary Retirement and the non-filling of vacancies, whilst at the same time maintaining income targets.

The final accounts for 2014 - 15 show a deficit of £21,641 against the targeted deficit of £26,300, proposed in the Revenue Estimates early in 2014. The budgeted deficit was agreed in order to assist Park Management in meeting the Park Authority's service obligations, whilst managing costs and resources, following the 2014-15, 16% (£164,700) reduction in the member authorities' requisitions. A further reduction in Requisitions is budgeted for 2015-16. Coming into 2014-15 the operational surplus stood at £41,408, going into 2015 - 16 the operational surplus stands at £19,767.

9.04 Grant Income

Grant funding has been important to the many projects managed by the Park Authority. The schedule below illustrates projects funded by Grant Awards during 2014-15 as follows:-

Grant	£	Project
Renfrewshire LEADER	24,560	Windows on Wildlife Project ended 30/09/14
Renfrewshire Council Graduate Intern Support Grant	5000	Race 2 the Games
Event Scotland	9000	Race 2 the Games
Celebrate Fund	9000	Race 2 the Games
Scottish Action on Mental Health	4000	1 x Branching Out programme
Forestry Commission	4000	1 x Branching Out programme
Inverclyde Council	10,000	Race 2 the Games

Contribution to the National Outcomes of Report: - Annual Report 2014/15.
Completed by: - D. Gatherer, Regional Park Manager.

1. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe	
2. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	
3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	
4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens	
5. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	
6. We live longer, healthier lives	
7. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	
8. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	
9. We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	
10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	
11. We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others	
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations	
13. We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	
14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	
15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	The Annual Report shows the wide range of services provided by the Park and the efforts of the Park Authority to continually provide these services effectively