

Notice of Meeting and Agenda Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 11 December 2020	11:30	Remotely by MS Teams ,

KENNETH GRAHAM
Clerk

Membership

Councillor Audrey Doig, Councillor Andy Doig, Councillor Tom Begg and Councillor Bill Binks (Renfrewshire Council): Councillor Innes Nelson and Councillor David Wilson (Inverclyde Council): and (vacant position) and Councillor Todd Ferguson (North Ayrshire Council).

Councillor Audrey Doig (Chair): Councillor David Wilson (Vice Chair): vacant position (Vice Chair).

Recording of Meeting

This meeting will be recorded for subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site. If you have any queries regarding this please contact Committee Services on 0141 618 7111. To find the recording please follow the link which will be attached to this agenda once the meeting has concluded.

Recording of Meeting

<https://youtu.be/ozsnwkjJzOY>

Items of business

Apologies

Apologies from members.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare an interest in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest.

- | | | |
|----------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Minute of Joint Committee | 3 - 6 |
| | Minute of meeting of the Joint Committee held on 4 September 2020. | |
| 2 | Minute of Consultative Forum | 7 - 10 |
| | Minute of meeting of the Consultative Forum held on 4 September 2020. | |
| 3 | Revenue Budget Monitoring | 11 - 14 |
| | Report by Treasurer. | |
| 4 | Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Annual Report 2019/20 | 15 - 28 |
| | Report by Interim Park Co-ordinator. | |
| 5 | Date of Next Meeting | |
| | Note that the next meeting of the Joint Committee will be held at 11.30 am on 19 February 2021. | |



Minute of Meeting Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 04 September 2020	11:30	Remotely by MS Teams ,

Present

Councillor Tom Begg, Councillor Bill Binks, Councillor Andy Doig and Councillor Audrey Doig (all Renfrewshire Council); and Councillor Innes Nelson and Councillor David Wilson (both Inverclyde Council).

Chair

Councillor Audrey Doig, Chair, presided.

In Attendance

F Carswell, Interim Park Co-ordinator, F Carlin, Head of Planning & Housing Services (Lead Officer), A MacArthur, Head of Finance, S Jones, Assistant Regeneration Manager, M Ball, Principal Accountant (Management Accounting) and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer (all Renfrewshire Council); and M Ferris, Senior Manager and S Afzal, Auditor (both Audit Scotland).

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Additional Item

The Chair intimated that there was an additional item of business in relation to a Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Governance Update which had not been included in the notice calling the meeting. The Chair, being of the opinion that the item, which is dealt with at item 4 below, was urgent in view of the need to advise members of the position, authorised its consideration.

1 Minute

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 19 June 2020.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Revenue Budget Monitoring

There was submitted a revenue budget monitoring report by the Treasurer in respect of the Joint Committee for the period 1 April to 24 July 2020.

The report intimated that gross expenditure was currently £83,000 underspent and income was currently £109,000 under recovered resulting in a net overspend of £26,000, which was projected to climb to £166,700 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in the closure of the regional park at the end of March 2020. The outdoor spaces had now re-opened but the income generating activities remained closed except for a takeaway café service at Castle Semple which re-opened in July 2020.

At the Joint Committee meeting held on 19 June 2020 it had been agreed that only 50% of the reserves balance of £112,036, held as at 31 March 2020, could be utilised to meet the projected overspend and that any overspend above the value of £56,000 would require to be approved by the Joint Committee.

It was noted that at this stage in the financial year, the projected year-end overspend of £166,700 was above the agreed threshold and the total value of the current reserves balance. The projected outturn was based on no commercial income being generated in 2020/21.

It was currently anticipated that historic project balances would be released in the course of 2020/21 which would also be directed to address the in-year projected deficit. This might result in a position where total project balances, when added to the full general reserve balance of £112,036, would meet the current projected overspend. In this event, any residual reserve balance would require to be returned to requisitioning councils and the report proposed that, in this event, balances were returned in proportion to the requisition payments made in 2020/21.

The report further proposed that if the total of project balances and general reserves were insufficient to meet the actual deficit incurred that funding to address the remaining deficit be provided by requisitioning councils, again in proportion to the requisition payments made in 2020/21.

DECIDED:

(a) That the decisions of Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Councils to terminate the agreement governing the Joint Committee with effect from 1 April 2021 be noted; and

(b) That it be agreed that in winding up the Joint Committee, all available reserve and project balances be utilised to address the current year projected deficit, with any residual balance being distributed in proportion to the agreed requisition contributions for 2020/21. In the event that there were insufficient reserve balances to meet the actual deficit incurred, it be agreed that additional funding be provided by requisitioning councils in proportion to the requisition contributions in 2020/21 to address the shortfall.

3 Audited Annual Accounts 2019/20

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Committee held on 19 June 2020, there was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the audited annual accounts 2019/20.

The report intimated that in accordance with the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 the audited accounts must be approved for signature by the Joint Committee no later than 30 September each year. This year, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, this date had been extended to 30 November 2020, however this was not required for the audited accounts of this Joint Committee.

Section 10 of the regulations required that the Joint Committee consider any report made by the appointed auditor before deciding whether to sign the audited accounts. The findings of the appointed auditor, Audit Scotland, formed Appendix 1 to the report. Details of three adjustments made to the accounts during the course of the audit were contained in the report.

It was noted that page 11 of the audited accounts made reference to a required signature by the Treasurer. This would be amended to make reference to a required signature by the Lead Officer.

Following approval, the audited accounts, which formed Appendix 2 to the report, would be signed by the Lead Officer, the Chair and the Treasurer by secure digital signature.

DECIDED:

(a) That the findings of the 2019/20 audit, as contained in Appendix 1 to the annual audit report, be noted; and

(b) That the audited accounts 2019/20 be approved for signature by the Lead Officer, Chair and Treasurer.

4 Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Governance Update

The Lead Officer submitted a report updating the Joint Committee on the recent decisions by Renfrewshire Council and Inverclyde Council to terminate the Minute of Agreement and dissolve the Park Authority Joint Committee with effect from 31st March 2021.

The report intimated that Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Authority Joint Committee (Park Authority) was governed by a Minute of Agreement (MoA) which was most recently agreed by Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Councils in 2004. On 17 February 2020, North Ayrshire Council gave notice of withdrawal from the MoA and following consideration by the remaining Councils it was concluded that the governance arrangements as they currently stood were disproportionate to the size and operation of activities within the Park and the most appropriate option was to terminate the MoA and for the Park Authority to be dissolved.

At meetings of Renfrewshire Council's Environment and Infrastructure Board held on 26 August 2020 and Inverclyde Council's Environment and Regeneration Committee held on 27 August 2020 it had been agreed that the MoA be terminated and that the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Joint Committee be dissolved from 31 March 2021.

Prior to the termination of the MoA, each Council would confirm their share of the liabilities and moveable assets of the Park Authority and thereafter, individual Councils would manage separately the financial arrangements for those services which were provided solely within their respective boundaries. Renfrewshire Council was the employing authority for park staff and any organisational development changes would be agreed in full consultation with partner organisations and staff.

Following the dissolution of the Joint Committee, each local authority would make investment and operational decisions separately regarding the parts of the Regional Park lying within their respective boundaries. These arrangements would not affect the designation of Clyde Muirshiel as a Regional Park or the Country Park designations for Muirshiel and Castle Semple. Each Council would also investigate partnership opportunities in relation to marketing and promoting the recreational and environmental education role of the Regional Park.

Liaison with Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Councils would continue to ensure the protection and enhancement of the Regional Park's natural environment, while opportunities for ongoing community involvement in park activities would be encouraged. Opportunities to generate income by providing services under service level agreements would continue to be investigated to support the ongoing provision and development of activities within the Regional Park.

DECIDED: That the decisions of Renfrewshire Council and Inverclyde Council to terminate the Minute of Agreement and dissolve Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee with effect from 31 March 2021 be noted.

5 Date of Next Meeting

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held at 11.30 am on 11 December 2020.



Minute of Meeting Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Consultative Forum

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 04 September 2020	10:00	Remotely by MS Teams ,

Present

Councillor Innes Nelson and Councillor David Wilson (both Inverclyde Council); Councillor Audrey Doig (Renfrewshire Council); Ross Anderson (Scottish Rural Property and Business Association); Andrew McLeman (Gryffe Valley Rotary Club); Ian Dippie (Save The Grotas); Sybil Simpson and Nigel Willis (both Save Your Regional Park); Roger Hissett (Scottish Wildlife Trust – Ayrshire Branch) and Gordon Smith (Visit Scotland).

Chair

Councillor Nelson, Chair, presided.

In Attendance

F Carswell, Interim Park Co-ordinator (Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park); and F Carlin, Head of Planning and Housing Services, S Jones, Assistant Regeneration Manager and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer (all Renfrewshire Council).

Apology

Tabby Lamont (RSPB Scotland).

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Additional Item

The Chair intimated that there was an additional item of business in relation to discussion points raised by Nigel Willis in connection with the report in relation to Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Governance Update being considered by the Joint Committee following this meeting. The Chair, being of the opinion that the matters, which are dealt with at item 3 below, were urgent in view of the need to advise members of the position, authorised their consideration.

1 Minute

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Consultative Forum held on 14 February 2020.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Matters Arising

(a) New Projects since last meeting and rewilding proposals

It was noted that Joe Greenlees and Liz Parsons had not made contact with the Interim Park Co-ordinator.

DECIDED: That the matter be noted.

(b) Roller Skiing

It was noted that Susan Jones had not received any information in relation to roller skiing in Clyde Muirshiel.

DECIDED: That the matter be noted.

3 Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Governance Update

In relation to the report on this matter being considered by the Joint Committee following this meeting, members discussed the points raised by Nigel Willis.

During discussion it was noted that it was the Joint Committee that was being dissolved and not the Regional Park; that it was not the intention to remove the designation of Regional Park; that the Consultative Forum would be dissolved when the Joint Committee was dissolved; and that consideration should be given to forming a new group as a means of highlighting community and environmental issues which may impact the Regional Park.

DECIDED: That these matters and the discussion points be noted.

4 Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park - Lockdown Activity

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator relative to Park activity during the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report indicated that all Regional Park facilities had been closed to the public on 23 March 2020 and all education and leisure activity suspended as a result of the

COVID-19 pandemic. The open spaces of the Regional Park had remained a valuable outdoor resource for all able to access those spaces on foot or by bike during lockdown. The pandemic had delivered unusual environmental benefits with cleaner air, lower carbon emissions and a respite for wildlife.

It was highlighted that with the closure of the visitor centre and suspension of all activity, there had been no income during the period of the lockdown. It was anticipated that the importance of green spaces for physical and mental wellbeing, outdoor learning and leisure activities would be more important than ever during the phased recovery process. In line with Government guidance, and when appropriate, it was planned that the services provided in the Park, including education and leisure activities, would be delivered to meet the demand.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

Forum members discussed the following matters in relation to Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park:

5 Rigghill Wind Farm

The Chair advised that he had submitted a formal objection to North Ayrshire Council, on behalf of the Consultative Forum, in connection with the planning application for Rigghill Wind Farm and that Councillor Audrey Doig had also submitted a formal objection on behalf of the Joint Committee.

Members were advised that various community councils and other relevant organisations such as Save Your Regional Park and the Scottish Wildlife Trust had also submitted formal objections to the planning application.

DECIDED: That the update provided be noted.

6 Halkshill/Blairpark Developments

Members were advised that works were well underway and that a new forestry road and public footpath would be in place.

DECIDED: That the update provided be noted.

7 Burnfoot Road Development Proposals

Members were advised that a planning application had been lodged and was currently going through the due process.

DECIDED: That the update provided be noted.

8 Date of Next Meeting

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting of the Consultative Forum would be held at 10.00 am on 11 December 2020.

CLYDE MUIRSHIEL PARK AUTHORITY

To: Joint Committee

On: 11 December 2020

Report by: The Treasurer

Heading: Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 16 October 2020

1. Summary

- 1.1 Gross Expenditure is currently £118,000 underspent and income is £160,000 under recovered resulting in a net overspend of £42,000. This is summarised in point 4.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members consider the report.

3 Budget Adjustments Since Last Report

- 3.1 There have been no budget adjustments since the start of the financial year.

4 Budget Performance

4.1 Current Position <i>Previously Reported</i>	Net Overspend £42,000 <i>Net Overspend £26,000</i>
Projected Year End Position <i>Previously Reported</i>	Net Overspend £119,000 <i>Net Overspend £166,700</i>

The current net overspend of £42,000, which is projected to climb to £119,000, is due to the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the closure of The Park at the end of March 2020.

The projected year end overspend has reduced from £166,700 to £119,000 due to activities now taking place at Castle Semple, the café at this location opening for a takeaway service and also making various savings within each of the individual budget headings.

The revised projected year end overspend of £119,000 is still above the current reserves balance of £112,036. As previously mentioned in the Joint Committee report in September, historic project balances will be released over the course of 2020/21 which will be directed to address the in year projected deficit.

In the event that the total of project balances and general reserves is insufficient to meet the actual deficit incurred, then it is proposed that funding to address the remaining deficit be provided by requisitioning councils, again in proportion to the requisition payments made in 2020/21.

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2020/21
1st April 2020 to 16th October 2020

JOINT COMMITTEE : CLYDE MUIRSHIEL PARK AUTHORITY

Description	Agreed Annual Budget	Year to Date Budget	Year to Date Actual	Adjustments	Revised Actual	Budget Variance		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) = (4 + 5)	(7)		
£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	%	
Employee Costs	587	310	249	0	249	61	19.7%	underspend
Premises Related	35	19	18	0	18	1	5.3%	underspend
Supplies and Services	172	61	13	0	13	48	78.7%	underspend
Transport Costs	33	18	11	0	11	7	38.9%	underspend
Support Services	38	1	(1)	1	0	1	100.0%	underspend
Transfer Payments	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	breakeven
GROSS EXPENDITURE	867	409	290	1	291	118	28.9%	underspend
Contributions from Local Authorities	(436)	(327)	(327)	0	(327)	0	0.0%	breakeven
Other Income	(349)	(189)	(101)	72	(29)	(160)	-84.7%	under-recovery
INCOME	(785)	(516)	(428)	72	(356)	(160)	-31.0%	under-recovery
TRANSFER (TO)/FROM RESERVES	82	(107)	(138)	73	(65)	(42)	-39.3%	overspend

	£000's
Bottom Line Position to 16th October 2020 is an overspend of	<u>(42)</u>
Anticipated Year End Budget Position is an overspend of	<u>(37)</u>
Opening Reserves	(112)
Projected Draw on Reserves	<u>119</u>
Projected Closing Reserves	<u>7</u>

Glossary of Terms

Employee Costs - Includes direct employee costs such as salary costs, overtime and indirect employee Costs such as training, recruitment advertsing.

Premises Related - This group includes expenses directly related to the running of premises and land. Includes rates, rents and leases, utilities, contract cleaning.

Supplies & Services - This includes all direct supplies and service expenses incurred by the committee. Also includes administrative costs such as stationary, postages, printing in addition to ICT equipment, telephony equipment and non recruitment related advertising.

Support Services - Includes central support charges e.g Renfrewshire Council SLA.

Transfer Payments - Includes costs of payments to individuals for which no good or services are received in return e.g Apprenticeship Levy (previously reported under employee costs).

Transport Costs - This group includes all costs associated with the provision, hire or use of transport, including travelling allowances. Includes taxi and car hire costs, Includes staff mileage (previously reported employee costs).



CLYDE MUIRSHIEL PARK AUTHORITY

Report to: Joint Committee

On: 11 December 2020

Report By: Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

SUBJECT: Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Annual Report 2019 to 2020

1. Purpose of Report:

- 1.1 To advise members of the Joint Committee of the activities and operations delivered in the Park and by its staff during 2019 to 2020.
- 1.2 This report reflects activities that took place before the COVID 19 restrictions were implemented.

2. Recommendation:

- 2.1 That the Joint Committee notes the contents of this report.

3. Background:

- 3.1 This Annual Report provides an opportunity for the Joint Committee to comment on what has been achieved and also discuss pertinent items about the future development of the Park.
- 3.2 The report provides detail on Leisure Activity and Health, Education and Outdoor Learning and Environmental Management activities.

4. Conclusion:

- 4.1 The Park reports its outcomes each financial year which allows stakeholders to see what the Park has achieved.

Members wishing further information regarding this report should contact Fiona Carswell,
Interim Park Co-ordinator, Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority, tel 01505 842882.

Annual Report 2019/20

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

Presented to the Park Authority Joint Committee

December 2020

1.0 Introduction

This Annual Report seeks to outline activities and operations in Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park within the context of the priorities for the Park Authority and as set out in the Park Strategy 2016 -2021 to promote : -

- Leisure activity and health
- Education and outdoor learning
- Environmental management

This report presents the work of the Park Authority and its staff in the year April 2019 to March 2020.

2.0 Leisure Activity and Health

2.1 Outdoor leisure activities will be resourced and developed in line with market demand.

2.1.1 *Maintain standards for related governing body accreditation.*

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park gained Adventure Activity Licencing (AALA) Accreditation, Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Accreditation and British Canoe Union (BCU) Accreditation.



2.1.2 *Provide for Duke of Edinburgh Awards (DofE).*

Duke of Edinburgh activities continue to increase in the Park with groups coming from across the central belt to undertake their expeditions. More than five hundred (532) young people made use of the Inverclyde countryside for Bronze expeditions this year. Actual numbers may be higher as unfortunately not all groups liaise in advance.

2.1.3 *Develop accessibility within the Park and its activities.*

2019/20 saw another positive year for clients with disabilities. New client groups took part in activities increasing participation numbers in some areas. The numbers of people wanting to come for accessible powerboat trips from care services rose by almost 50%.

2.1.4 *Develop cycling within the Park and surrounding area.*

Pedal the Park sportive took place (again) in May attracting 300 riders.

The Park was asked to support the HSBC Go Ride Glasgow event in August by providing accessible cycling at Glasgow Green.

In partnership with Inverclyde Project Community Tracks a number of cycle repair stations have been installed at key locations across the Park, they help cyclists undertake basic repairs and maintenance while out and about.

2.1.5 *Provide certified activity courses for the public.*

A variety of certified coaching courses ran in sailing, powerboat and paddle sports for nearly two hundred (182) participants.

2.1.6 *Provide bespoke courses for client organisations.*

In total over five thousand (5372) outdoor activity sessions were provided for client groups, this includes mainstream schools, ASN schools and various adult and junior care and support services.

2.1.7 *Develop / provide specialist activity days.*

This was the sixth year that we have provided mass participation events for both Scottish Disability Sport and Spinal Injuries Scotland. Both days were hugely successful with people coming from all over Scotland to take part in accessible sports, have discussions with support services and find out from the sport governing bodies what activity they could do in their own locality.

2.1.8 *Develop / provide specialist events.*

Events for the period have included, Pedal the Park 100km cycle sportive, Stargazing Nights, Model Yacht Championships, Accessible Sailing Regattas, sponsored walks or runs and a Classic Car Show.

The second Clyde Muirshiel Walking Festival took place in May 2019 with 82 people taking part in 13 walks led by 26 volunteer walk leaders. Most of the volunteer leaders were members of local rambler or hill walking groups.

The internationally renowned Original Mountain Marathon (OMM) was held in the Park with close to 2000 entrants from across the world taking part in a two day race. The competition started near Largs and made use of both Renfrewshire and Inverclyde hills. OMM staff and volunteers liaised with Park staff before, during and after the event with all participants visiting Muirshiel Country Park and camping overnight in a neighbouring field.

2.2 **The Park will continue to work with health services to facilitate health improvement activities.**

2.2.1 *Facilitate volunteering opportunities with community care groups.*

Park staff worked with Community Networks Adult Assisted Needs Group who provided 85 hours of volunteering at Muirshiel Country Park as well as 12 hours of volunteering at the Greenock Cut Centre.

2.2.2 *Facilitate Health walk programmes.*

There were 34 programmed walks by Rangers with a total of 383 participants. This included 25 Community Health walks around Lochwinnoch with 219 people and 9 walks with 164 people taking part from the Inverclyde Health Walking Group.

2.2.3 *Develop and deliver ecotherapy programmes.*

The 'Branching Out' Mental Health Referral programme at Muirshiel Country Park ran over 12 weeks providing 151 participant activities, this was part funded by the Forestry Commission in partnership with CMRP. Inverclyde SAMH completed a

branching out programme with 94 participant activities recorded within the time scale of this report.

The development of a youth program based on the successful Branching Out model has progressed with the Inverclyde Council Active School team. Funding is being sought for a series of Ranger led sessions for secondary students.

3.0 Education and Outdoor Learning

3.1 Promote the Park as a platform for Outdoor Learning

3.1.1 Facilitate school, college and university visits

The Park location, its infrastructure and staff help facilitate many visits to the Regional Park.

Nearly six hundred (559) young people engaged with Park staff and used the Regional Park for Duke of Edinburgh Award training and expedition activities during the year.



One secondary school of over one thousand pupils used the Greenock Cut trail for a sponsored walk.

3.1.2 Raise awareness of the Park and its resources through marketing and promotion via professional networks.

Park staff contribute to a number of networks and partnership activities such as 'Marine Conservation Society Beach Watch', 'British Marine Scotland', 'Sport Scotland Professional Officers Group', 'Local Area Tourism Partnerships' as well as work with Scotland's Rural College (SURC), University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and University of Glasgow.

Park staff contribute and often host both the Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Access Forums. As part of the Inverclyde Local Access Forum, Regional Park staff represented the Park at the National Access Forum conference. Park staff contributed to National & Regional Park Reviews and National Ranger Service Development.

Staff membership of the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association Council (SCRA) continues, with staff contributing to the SCRA child protection policy.

3.2 Deliver, monitor and review a programme of informative events for visitors of all ages, linking into curriculum outcomes where appropriate.

3.2.1 Deliver learning activities to groups, including schools, youth organisations and summer groups.

The total number of educational participants in the year was 2559. An additional two thousand (2254) people took part in events.

Learning activities ranged from work with school groups to family friendly events such as responsible access events and walks, habitat and wildlife awareness activities. Outdoor learning includes basic pond dipping and rock pooling sessions

with nursery pupils, introduction to food chains and mini-beast surveys with primary schools to bush craft skill and earth science with secondary school pupils. A breakdown can be seen in the following table:

Learning Activity Age \ No. at Location	Greenock Cut & Lunderston Bay	Muirshiel & Castle Semple
School - Nursery	173	28
School - Primary	604	514
School - Secondary	373	81
School – College/Uni	0	55
Talks	44	148
Eco-schools	0	0
John Muir/DofE	0	557
Total	1176	1383

Where possible most learning sessions are delivered within the Park, however outreach work is undertaken and delivered within the community or at schools if more appropriate such as visiting day care centres or residential homes.

3.2.2 *Establish clear links between educational activity and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).*

Rangers continue to work alongside teachers, to ensure that educational visits cover numerous sections within the curriculum. Educational visits not only include the sciences but provide a connectivity to a wide variety of outcomes and experiences from across the whole curriculum.

3.3 **Use the Park's digital resources to maximise the scope for learning.**

3.3.1 *Maintain the Park's online profile, expanding reach where possible.*

Online, the website has regular blog content. Social media content reflects this and other messages/stories of relevance/engagement. All channels making regular interactions with the public, promoting events, activities and the day to day working activities of Park staff.

Social media engagement continues to increase, in March 2020 there were 4154 followers on Facebook, 2074 on Twitter and 1126 on Instagram. You Tube has been viewed over 140,000 times. TripAdvisor content is also monitored and actioned as appropriate.

3.3.2 *Provide a contemporary suite of accessible digital information.*

Outdoor activity courses and countryside events are all bookable online.

The mobile enabled website allows more information to be easily viewable, as new resources are developed; content is being made available online, examples of this include the Conservation Volunteer Programmes, Management Reports and Route

Guides for walks or cycles. A workshop was delivered and attended by six staff on how to produce engaging blogs.

Our library of digital images is key to delivering talks and presentations.

4.0 Environmental Management

4.1 Enhance the Park's natural heritage whilst safeguarding key species, habitats and landscape character.

4.1.1 *Deliver a comprehensive regime of inspections and maintenance whilst undertaking and contributing to environmental surveys and information gathering exercises.*

Inspections take place at all the visitor centres to ensure compliance with Health and Safety (H&S) legislation.

Countryside Rangers undertook nearly eighty (78) biological surveys during the year and submit their findings to national data bases to help monitor ecological trends. In Inverclyde butterfly, mammal, lizard and wetland bird surveys were undertaken as well as regular Osprey monitoring during breeding season. In Renfrewshire 45 surveys including wetland birds, butterflies and grey squirrel were undertaken.

Following last year's first ever Regional Park osprey pair successfully raising two chicks, this year, three young fledged and were ringed by Park staff.

High levels of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) is now recognised as a very likely annual summer feature of Castle Semple Loch. Permanent signs to inform the general public of the potential of toxic blue-green algae have been placed at three key points of lochside access. Occasional testing is recommended to confirm that the algae present are cyanobacteria and staff continue to inform visitors through online and on site communications when these levels are notably high.

Lunderston Bay Bathing Water quality is monitored by SEPA throughout the bathing season. The water quality is described as 'excellent, good, sufficient or poor'. Based on the last four years of monitoring data, Lunderston Bay has been categorised as 'Good'.

4.1.2 *Manage conservation volunteering activity.*

Overall, volunteers have contributed nearly four thousand (3945) hours of work. The work plans for all the Regional Park hosted volunteer groups are co-ordinated, planned and overseen by the Countryside Ranger Service. All of the tasks undertaken by our volunteers contributes to the successful maintenance of the Park.



Youth Volunteer Groups at Muirshiel/Castle Semple, many of whom are working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award contributed 897 hours. Those working on their John Muir Award contributed 135 hours.

The Castle Semple Conservation Volunteers (CSCV) did 1377 hours of work, this included tree preparation and planting, alien species removal, hedge maintenance, litter removal and wildflower garden work.

In Renfrewshire, business groups including RBS, Scottish Enterprise and Ordnance Survey contributed 189 hours of conservation work.

The Greenock Cut Conservation Volunteers (GCCV) did 1519 hours of work, this includes their attendance and contribution to the larger public volunteer events such as the quarterly beach cleans. The group were finalists in the 2019 Inverclyde “Reach for the Stars” Environment and Heritage Team Award.

In Inverclyde, an additional 168 hours volunteer hours were contributed by companies such as EE, Insight Vacations, RBS, Scottish Enterprise and Community Networks and a group from a local Boys Brigade.

The two Conservation volunteer groups worked together and jointly raised £1,652 by selling handmade wooden Christmas crafts.

4.1.3 *Undertake local conservation projects and input to regional schemes where appropriate.*

At Muirshiel preparation work for tree planting included the burning of the Sitka brashings. Local volunteers and a group from Ordnance Survey have planted around 1500 native broadleaf and Scot’s pine. An additional 2500 trees will be planted by the Park staff.

The Greenock Cut based Rangers continue to collect data gathered at our beach clean events for the Marine Conservation Society. This is then collated for the Scottish and National Government to be used as part of the EU’s “Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2020”.

Scottish Water started their essential maintenance project on the dam on Loch Thom. Prior to work starting they liaised with the Ranger Service as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

4.1.4 *Engage staff in training and CPD opportunities to maintain and improve upon skill level.*

Park Staff are continually encouraged to look for and apply for training appropriate to the tasks they undertake in their job role. This year Scottish Ambulance HART team provided a day’s training on how to deal with casualties in remote Park locations inaccessible to ‘normal’ ambulances. There were Ranger training visits to Eglington Park and Whitelees Wind Farm, cycle leader, blog and First Aid training.

4.1.5 *Seek funding for environmental management projects.*

Park staff support the Volunteer groups apply for funding to delivery conservation activities in the Regional Park.

The Semple Stories Lochwinnoch's Glories Heritage project commenced with the employment of a Development Officer in October 2019. Project funding of £37,242.70 is from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LEADER programme. The 11 month project will engage with volunteers and SRUC Auchincruive to provide interpretation boards, leaflets and guided walks. Oral histories will be gathered from the Lochwinnoch area. Schools engagement will enable them to learn about their local historical environment.

The Branching Out programme was supported with a £4,000 grant from the Forestry Commission.

4.2 **Work collaboratively with other stakeholders involved in the provision of outdoor management.**

4.2.1 *Consider opportunities for cooperative outdoor management where there is benefit to the Park and its visitors.*

This work is ongoing and includes the Forestry Commission, Scottish Power, Scottish Water, Original Mountain Marathon (OMM) and local landowners and stakeholders.

5.0 **Park Management**

5.1 ***Park Visitor Figures***

Over seven hundred thousand people visited the Regional Park in 2019/20. Visitor figures are reported as the number of visitors per site, as outlined below, this is based on car counter data and observational records.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Greenock Cut	53 797	70 664*	60 549*
Lunderston Bay	218 221	228 288	225 961
Castle Semple	335 438	320 052	392 612*
Muirshiel	37 426	38 376	38 652
Total	644 882	657 320	717 774

*educated estimate, full car counter data not available

5.2 **Maximise opportunities to improve park assets and infrastructure.**

5.2.1 *Carry out review of assets and ensure they are yielding maximum benefit.*

Progress has been made reviewing Park assets. Processes are underway to consolidate Park resources to improve efficiency and accessibility. Opportunities to improve the visitor facilities at Castle Semple Visitor Centre continue to be explored through the Castle Semple Infrastructure Enhancement Project, funded by Renfrewshire Council and Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LEADER.

5.2.2 *Seek appropriate funding opportunities.*

Alternative funding streams continue to be explored in order to improve service. Grant funding has supported activity and mental health development programmes and conservation volunteer activities.

5.3 **Maximise income generation via commercial activity.**

- 5.3.1 Outdoor Activities income was £148,741. More than five thousand (5554) individuals participated in organised outdoor activities as detailed in the table below. Covid19 impacted on operations during March 2020.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Mainstream Adults Taster/multi activity	705	745	431
Mainstream Junior Taster/multi activity	1584	1814	1554
ASN Junior taster/multi activity	1191	1967	2153
ASN Adult taster/multi activity	1166	840	522
Accessible Powerboat Experiences	225	371	712
Duke of Edinburgh provision	245	135	0
Coaching course places all disciplines	219	272	182
Total places provided	5335	6144	5554

- 5.3.2 Retail and Catering income this year was £145,217 down slightly on the previous year. Efforts to reduce costs and streamline operations while still providing a countryside welcome and visitor information continued.

5.3 *Marketing Activities*

Activities took place throughout the year utilising local press, websites, posters, leaflets and social media channels. The Park continued to support content and material for Paisley.is and DiscoverInverclyde.com

Events, such as the Walking Festival and Pedal the Park had their own marketing plans and created partnership working opportunities, media coverage and new audience awareness.

Various corporate groups volunteered in the Park and created media coverage.

5.4 *Health and Safety*

The Park continues to work to align Health and Safety policy and practices with those of Renfrewshire Council, the servicing authority. There were no RIDDOR reportable incidents.

5.5 *Feedback and Complaints*

Feedback is received in many forms including social media channels, via survey monkey from courses and events, paper forms and thank you letters.

Considering the visitor numbers, complaints remain minimal and minor in nature, written complaints for the period are:

Regional Park	Fly tipping	1
	Information on walks around Largs	1
	Communication	3
Muirshiel	Toilet Opening Hours	1
Castle Semple	Responsible Dog Ownership	1
	Litter/Wild Camping	1
	Lack of Wreath Making Event	1
Greenock Cut	Signage/Toilet Opening Times	2
Lunderston	Knotweed	1

