

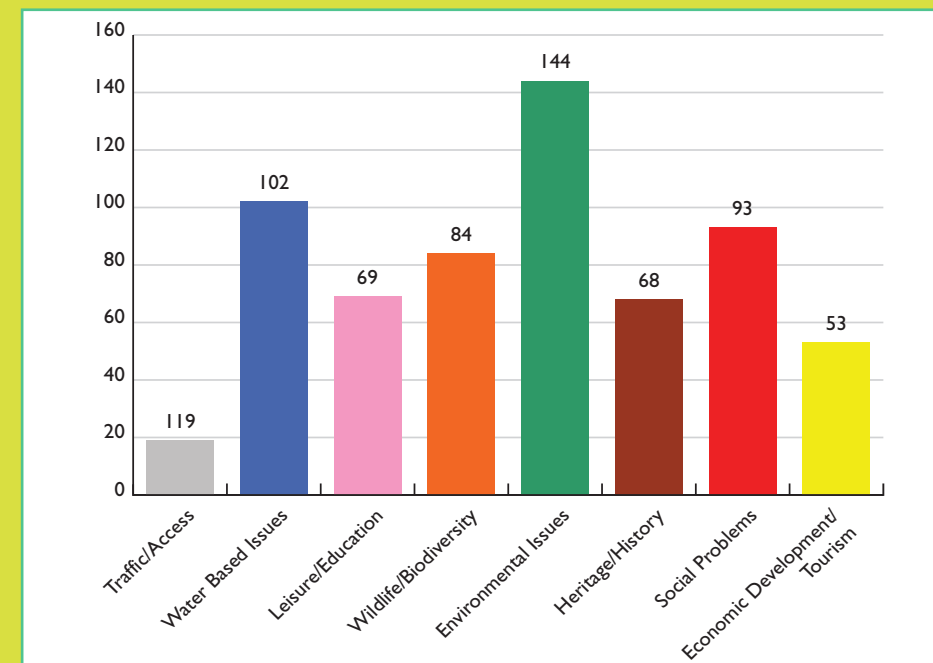
COMMUNITIES ALONG THE CARRON

Mapping the Issues & Aspirations of Sixteen River Carron Communities



Salmon leaping on the River Carron

WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID...



DURING the Spring 2009 Community Conversations, eight overall themes emerged, as shown in the graph. The topic of most interest and concern is Environmental Issues, which includes pollution, litter, fly tipping, invasive species, risk to wildlife habitat, etc. Because this project is focused on a common body of water, Water Based Issues were given a separate category, which does include some environmental issues — flooding, low flows, pollution, etc.

The communities told us their foremost desire is to clean up the River Carron of litter, fly tipping, dog fouling and any sites of pollution. The encouraging news is that the water quality is good and the river is regenerating itself after decades of industrial use. However, there are rumours of pollution from some tributaries into the River Carron. People feel the need for factual information and reassurance about the condition of the river. They also wish to see paths made more accessible, presentable and connected to community. The desire for a fish ladder is strong. Accessibility, connection of paths, erection of bridges, preservation and enhancement of wildlife

habitats are all important to the people — and a need to continue what has begun with Communities Along the Carron through the formation of a River Carron regeneration group. There is much interest in a heritage and biodiversity trail — markers, kiosks, plaques in a visually coherent fashion, so that residents and visitors realise that the Carron corridor is one big river community that cares about its sustainability and has much to offer. There is discussion of ways to use the river for education of the children, to ensure an awareness in them of the importance of its biological future. Another issue is the antisocial behaviour and vandalism that occurs along the river paths and green areas. A desire to take back the river for family leisure use is strong.

While there is still some industry along the Carron, in the past the river was primarily used for commerce and employment in heavy industries. Now there is a desire to commemorate and celebrate that rich heritage and history while never forgetting - nor allowing again - the environmental devastation that such industry can leave behind.

A FEW IDEAS

Out of the Community Conversations of Spring 2009 have come a few initial ideas for projects that could launch an Action Plan for River Carron regeneration:

- Formation of a voluntary constituted River Carron regeneration group
- Installation of salmon ladder at Fankerton/Stoneywood
- Explore potential of mini hydro schemes
- General litter, fly tip and dog fouling clean-up of river and path areas
- Comprehensive Heritage and Biodiversity Trail for 19.8 miles of River Carron
- Upgrade Access/Links between river paths (for walking & cycling)
- Promotion & Marketing of River Carron for biodiversity and leisure activities

WHAT ARE THE WEE GREEN ICONS ABOUT?

Falkirk Council is now registered with Green Map, an international system using a universal set of green icons on maps created by local communities, council services, schools, etc. This is Falkirk Council's first Green Map. For more information on this increasingly popular community engagement tool, visit <http://www.greenmap.org>.

A reoccurring issue at the Community Conversations was the dog fouling problem along the river paths.

For information on the Green Dog Walkers project, call 01324 504433 or contact greenmapwalkers@yahoo.co.uk.

GREEN DOG WALKERS:
A friendly way to tackle dog fouling issues in the Falkirk area.

LEAVE ONLY PAWPRINTS!



HOW DO YOU GET TO THE RIVER FROM HERE?

THIS MAP represents an overview of the current status, issues and aspirations of sixteen communities along the River Carron. The 2009 Community Conversations focused primarily on regeneration and environmental issues; these were the main concerns of the communities.

The physical environment influences, to a large degree, the economic, social and cultural health of a community. It would appear that the people in the communities along the Carron already understand that the enhancement of green spaces along our river can shift the perceptions of our area for both residents and visitors in a positive way.

This map will be updated to mark the regenerative achievements of those who love and respect this river, its history, beauty and future.

“Water is a living, vibrant, essential life force. How do you get to the river from here? First, you claim the river. Second, you respect the river. Third, you get on, in or near the river. Fourth, you collect and repeat stories about the river. Fifth, you never forget the journey to the river. Sixth, you always introduce someone else to the river.”

Terri L Baltimore

CHILDREN TAKING PART IN THE FUTURE OF THE RIVER CARRON...

During the Communities Along the Carron project, children have taken part in the initial study on the status of, issues about and wishes for the River Carron, so that, as development projects come to fruition - and as they come into their teen and young adult years - they can feel a sense of involvement and pride knowing that they took part in the groundwork for those initiatives.

River Walks and Mapping Exercises

During the Spring 2009, over 200 children visited areas of the river within walking distance of their schools - Dunipace Old Gala Park, Swing Bridge, Mill Lade/Weir, Abbotshugh, Cobblebrae, Carron Dams, Brackish Lagoon. They focused on bird watching, litter, dog fouling and invasive species. Some classes did advance research on such issues as Japanese Knotweed and local industrial history before their river walk, others did follow up projects.

The children used a system of Green Map icons to mark where they found aquatic life, good and bad path access, broken bottles, birds, bluebells, historic sites, orchards, butterflies and shopping trolleys in the river. Their collective data included 140 significant sightings of dog fouling areas, 86 sightings of Japanese Knotweed and 54 notations of “good bird watching” along a collective stretch of approximately 9 miles of the River Carron.

Creative Arts

Some pupils used the arts to express their feelings about the River Carron - songs, stories, wire and yarn sculpture, paintings, drawings, photographs and art frames made from “found” objects along the riverbanks. Several hundred pupils took part in an art competition on the river theme and 25 pupils won. As their prize they received 5 Saturday workshop art lessons at Delta Art Studios. In the Summer 2009 their Fish Shoal Art Installation and other river-themed art were exhibited at Delta along with the artwork of many adults, based on the River Carron and Atlantic Salmon themes. Over 3000 visitors enjoyed the exhibit and the children had a riverside experience they will never forget.

Green Projects

During the project, Denny, Carronshore and Bothkennar primary schools took part in the Carron in the Classroom project from Glasgow University, nurturing 750 fish eggs and releasing the wee brown trout into the river in Spring 2009. Some of the schools have won John Muir awards and all are working to advance in their Green Flags. The Eco movement in the schools is going strong and the potential for more River Carron green projects - river dipping, meadow sweeps, invertebrate studies, litter clean ups - is endless!

This map represents an overview of the current status, issues and aspirations of sixteen communities along the River Carron:

CARRON VALLEY • FANKERTON • STONEYWOOD • DUNIPACE • DENNY • LARBERT • STENHOUSEMUIR • BAINSFORD • LANGLEES • MUNGAL • CAMELON • CARRON • CARRONSHORE • BOTHKENNAR • SKINFLATS • GRANGEMOUTH

Detailed digital River Carron Green Map available at <http://www.greenmap.org/greenhouse/en/odel6081>

For further information on Communities Along the Carron or to receive this information in large print, braille or community languages, contact Falkirk Community Planning Partnership, tel: 01324 590950 or e-mail: frank.mcchord@falkirk.gov.uk

www.falkirk.gov.uk/goto/rivercarron

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Falkirk Council

EUROPE AND SCOTLAND WORKING TOGETHER



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DISCLAIMER: Falkirk Council has tried to ensure that all information in this leaflet is accurate when it went to press (September 2009), but accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions. Printed on recycled paper and designed by Communications Unit, Corporate and Neighbourhood Services, Falkirk Council



WHERE THE WILD GARLIC GROWS...
 Along the River Carron grow a vast assortment of trees, flowers and wild plants, some edible, some beautiful, some rare, all signs of a very old woodland area to be preserved. Ash, hawthorn, rowan and lime. Wild garlic, garlic mustard, dog rose and butterbur. Holly, hazel, sweet cicely and lesser celandine. Silver birch, elder, willowherb and pink purslane. To name a few.

A HERITAGE TRAIL...
 Communities along the Carron are proud of their rich and diverse Scottish history and heritage - from Pictish forts to Roman walls, 15th century battle sites to old drove roads, 200-year old paper mill sites to industrial era iron works. A natural but neglected path to these sites deserves to be marked with classic, vandal-proof signage, environmental art, viewing platforms, monuments, sitting areas and kiosks. The people have asked that the river paths be returned to all generations, and opened up to be more inviting to visitors and families.

FANKERTON and STONEYWOOD are home to Johnson's Park, a beautiful nature trail along the Carron. This community welcomes development and tourism and wishes to see more generations using its natural assets of riverside footpaths and good fishing spots. They support the idea of a salmon ladder at Fankerton Gorge and encourage more health walking and cycling groups to visit.

ONE LONG RIVER PATH...
 The communities have said they want to connect with each other. Hikers from Fankerton want holes in the path repaired and nettles removed to open up access to Denny. Cyclists from Denny want to get to Larbert. Carron and Langlees are ready for a connecting bridge. All along the River Carron, a good potential pathway infrastructure already is in place but needs brush cleared, litter, fly tipping and dog fouling removed, path surfaces upgraded, paths connected, footbridges and cycle accesses built, lighting installed, signage, better policing and maintenance. The desire lines along the river need to be spruced up and opened up, to enable people to get to the river, to see its beauty and begin to remember what a natural resource it truly is.

WHERE THE KINGFISHER AND OTTER RESIDE...
 The River Carron is home to a wide and wild assemblage of creatures - deer, otters, herons, foxes, bats, black minks, ospreys, kingfishers, owls, hares, salmon, trout, aquatic life, invertebrates, many species of migratory birds. The daily conversation of those who live along the river includes such vital reports as, "I saw three deer in the meadow near the burn today on my way to work." High on the wish list of the people who took part in the Community Conversations was that these creatures be protected as a continuing and vital part of daily life along the Carron.

A rich industrial history and ironworks heritage are the background to **CARRON and CARRONSHORE** communities, and a Roman history precedes all of this. The people here take great pride and interest in their local wildlife habitats and want to see their beautiful footpaths enhanced and not so neglected. Health initiatives (walking), family use of paths and green areas are highly valued along the river here. Carron Ironworks, the Grahamston Gates, the idea of an iron museum, a celebration of the industrial history and tidal swell issues all emerged as important in the community conversation.

BOTHKENNAR, SKINFLATS and GRANGEMOUTH form a unique area, being home to a vast array of migratory birds due to the saltmarsh at Skinflats and its SSSI status. There is great potential here, led by RSPB, as a birdwatching and international educational tourist site. The key community drivers here are to encourage natural heritage and sustainability. The return of water passage is of interest and accessibility to the river in this area should be addressed with links to the Helix project. River management, flood prevention, post industrial waste clean up, connecting paths and bridges all emerged as of interest in the community conversation here.

Reservoir



FLY TIPPING ALONG THE RIVER CARRON - in the water, on the banks, in the green spaces - is a major issue that Communities Along the Carron wish to tackle. Recently 10 tonnes of scrap metal and household goods were removed by a professional team from one mile of River Carron in Denny through CGI, the Litter Strategy Team and SEPA funding. The people wish to see more enforcement, clean ups and education on this issue.



LET THE SALMON LEAP!
 A reoccurring wish of the people living along the River Carron is that fish ladders be installed to enable the salmon to have as full access as possible to the River Carron. With a fish ladder installed at Fankerton Gorge, Carron Glen, both Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout would be able to pass upstream with ease to the high quality spawning gravel beds of the Upper River Carron and various burns. Sustainable salmon breeding numbers would greatly benefit the River Carron's angling future - an ever increasing form of tourism in Scotland. And just to see the salmon leaping would boost morale for people of all ages!

DENNY and DUNIPACE see the annual release of hundreds of wee brown trout at the River Carron here, as part of the Carron in the Classroom project. The River Carron runs through these two interlinked communities and is undergoing clean ups of its paths, especially en route to the new Denny High School. The paper and iron castings industries are the economic history of the area with many sites now redeveloped or in the process of regeneration. The Carron Glen Wildlife Reserve, managed by Scottish Wildlife Trust (a Site of Special Scientific Interest) is on its doorstep and children are a vital resource here, with the community being home to no less than five primary schools.



The community conversations identified **TWO PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** for Communities Along the Carron: litter and dog fouling along the river paths and green spaces. Clean ups, maintenance, education and enforcement are key. The FC Litter Strategy Team, Keep Scotland Beautiful and Green Dog Walkers are working hard on these problems, trying to raise public awareness and change attitudes, but there is much more work to be done to see real progress on these issues at the community level.

BIODIVERSITY TO CELEBRATE!
 Along with the heritage trail, the people also want to see this area's biodiversity and natural heritage celebrated and protected including: signage, interpretation and viewing areas, enhancement of the River Carron corridor green spaces for educational and leisure use, and access to SSSI areas for eco tourism and research. The natural environment of this corridor is an invaluable resource to be respected, documented and made more accessible to all.



INVASIVE SPECIES contribute to path access problems and are a threat to local biodiversity. In areas where Japanese Knotweed has grown so extensively as to be holding up banks of the River Carron, serious issues have arisen in the community conversations regarding the impact on flood defence, and the costly and protracted removal process. Mapping and monitoring projects sponsored by Community Green Initiative and SEPA are underway to determine the full extent of the problem along the River Carron. Giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam are also widespread invasive species to be addressed.



LARBERT and STENHOUSEMUIR are home to some of the most wildly beautiful parts of the River Carron. Wildlife, biodiversity and environmental clean ups are primary concerns for this community. The Mill Lade/Weir is undergoing a regeneration with the help of Central Scotland Forest Trust and a local environmental group, LASER. The Lade connects to Carron Dams (SSSI) which has great potential for enhancement - with work already begun by Scottish Wildlife Trust. Potential leisure areas exist along the river here, which the community would like to see developed, not only for tourists but for those who reside along the Carron.



BAINSFORD, LANGLEES, MUNGAL and CAMELON are home to an interesting path network, natural heritage and industrial history. This community is seriously interested in the enhancement and preservation of its native species, including fruit orchards, community gardens and harvesting. A rich mud forms the river banks here, a virtual soup of historical ruins that evidence the waterway when it was active with barges and boats. Flood defence, pollution, better path links, heritage signage are all issues here. A strong community spirit and environmental activist presence is here to be tapped into.

PUT ON YOUR WELLIES AND ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES...
 To enable all of these wishes to come true, there is a movement afoot for the people of the River Carron to form a constituted river regeneration group and build a proposal to develop, preserve and revitalise the Carron corridor. Funding agencies stand ready, willing and able to help. If you would like to become involved in some exciting projects, contact Communities Along the Carron. The resources and ideas are there...and the River Carron is waiting.

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THE BEGINNING OF A DIALOGUE...
 The River Carron is the reason that humans originally formed settlements in this place; it has sustained biological and economic life here through history. In Spring 2009, seven Community Conversations were held along the river corridor to identify the issues, problems, hopes and dreams of 16 riverside settlements regarding their coexistence with this river as it regenerates itself from previous industry pollution.
 Communities Along the Carron is the beginning of a collective dialogue to identify core elements for a design vision to enhance and develop the Carron corridor as a significant resource, to stimulate local economy and tourism, and to seek funding for a series of river projects - large, small, long and short term. Through involvement with this project, these seven geographic areas are beginning to connect as one big interdependent and thriving riverside community. The people are beginning to acknowledge that what is done to the river at one end impacts what happens at the other.



CARRON VALLEY has wonderful woodlands managed by the Forestry Commission and is home to Carron Reservoir built from 1935-38. Heritage is a central interest to the people of this community, and they hold a strong desire to preserve a tradition of untrampled peace. Carron Valley is highly valued as a wildlife area; flora and fauna are considered a big asset as well as local history and heritage. While the people here respect the "right to roam" culture, they are also concerned about the impact on local wildlife, farm animals and tranquility. They are proud of their clean air since there is no industry here and they appreciate their dark sky for star gazing and moonlight - they would like to keep it that way.