

Galloway Glens Scheme

An Overview

• September 2023 •

The Galloway Glens Scheme was an initiative of Dumfries & Galloway Council's Environment Team, seeking to 'connect people to the heritage' of the Ken/Dee river valley, while boosting the local economy and supporting sustainable communities.

Running between 2018 and 2023, and primarily funded by a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, it oversaw more than £6million in activity.

This report gives a mere taste of the work undertaken...

For more information, contact Dumfries & Galloway Council's Environment Team.



Galloway Glens Scheme: A Snapshot

THE SCHEME HAS UNDERTAKEN ACTIVITY

WORTH MORE THAN
£6 MILLION

4 YEARS

OF THE NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED
'CAN YOU DIG IT' COMMUNITY
ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

**'NATURE
POSITIVE'**

PROJECTS SUPPORTED
INCLUDING THREAVE LANDSCAPE
RESTORATION PROJECT,
PEATLAND CONNECTIONS AND
THE BLACK WATER OF DEE
HABITAT RESTORATION

206 HECTARES

OF LAND BROUGHT INTO
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

£100,000

SPENT ON **27 PROJECTS**
THROUGH THE SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

>21,000

ATTENDEES
AT PUBLIC EVENTS

10

NEW OR REFURBISHED
BUILDINGS

LAUNCHED THE
**SOUTH OF
SCOTLAND TREE
PLANTING
GRANT SCHEME**
IN D&G

690 VOLUNTEERS

GAVE THEIR TIME, WORTH MORE THAN

£300,000

23 MILES

OF FOOTPATH INSTALLED
OR IMPROVED

120 ATTENDEES

ON 'GO WILD CAMPS'

>2,000

ENTRIES ON THE GALLOWAY
GLENS PLACE NAME DATABASE

OVER 190

D&G BUSINESSES
RECEIVED WORK

>35,000 MILES

TRAVELLED BY THE TAGGED GREENLAND
WHITE FRONTED GESE

MORE THAN **90%**
OF VOLUNTEERS

SAID THEY HAD LEARNED
MORE ABOUT HERITAGE

**40 HEADLINE
PROJECTS**

SUPPORTED UP AND
DOWN THE VALLEY

95% OF PEOPLE

RATE THE GALLOWAY GLENS SCHEME AS
'GOOD OR VERY GOOD' (OF 420 SURVEYED)



“The Galloway Glens Scheme was an opportunity for everyone to celebrate, understand, connect with and protect our special heritage. The role of the Partnership Board was to provide oversight and strategic direction to the activity underway, and we are all delighted by the results achieved. We consider the scheme to be an exemplar approach to tackle contemporary challenges faced by rural Scotland.

We are very grateful to everyone involved, particularly scheme funders including The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and I'd like to add my personal thanks to the members of the Board, the staff, and to the community for taking part. Built on an approach of trust and empowerment, this Scheme witnessed some awesome work.”

Ted Leeming, Galloway Glens Scheme Chairman



“I think we are all slightly bewildered by how big this whole venture has become...

All of this was only possible thanks to the amazing partners we worked with, from funders through to local people giving up their free time and personal stories to give the scheme a real authenticity.

The Galloway Glens Scheme is an example of a heritage-led, ‘place-based’ approach to rural economic development and supporting sustainable communities. On a personal note, it has also been the most amazing job that have ever had. The Staff have been simply Herculean in their efforts, all working above and beyond to an astonishing degree. For that, I shall forever be grateful. #InGallowayItHappens.”

McNabb Laurie, Galloway Glens Team Leader



“From the earliest days of planning Galloway Glens was conceived as ‘Biosphere in action’ - an authentic, accessible way for people to experience our region’s natural and cultural heritage. For its duration, the Galloway Glens Scheme has celebrated and shared all the reasons why southwest Scotland holds UNESCO Biosphere status, inspiring pride among those who live here and reaching a diverse audience beyond the geographical border of the scheme. It has been great to see such a variety of projects funded and led by the Galloway Glens Scheme that are all interwoven with UNESCO’s global ethos of connecting with heritage in a sustainable way, with evident positive impacts on communities and the environment.”

Ed Forrest, Director of Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere



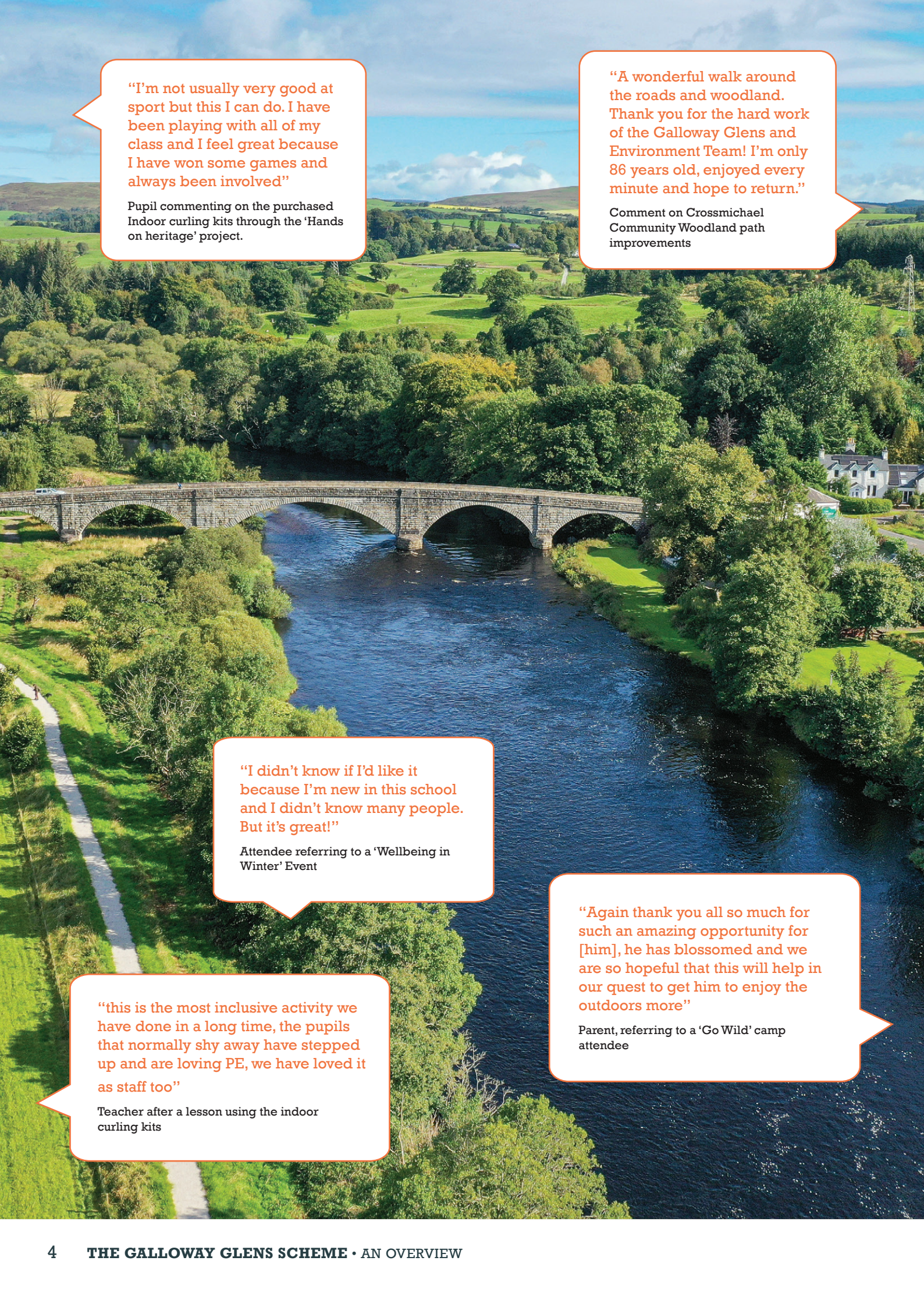
“The impact of the scheme is visible on so many levels – on a project-by-project basis but also on a broader landscape-scale.

Dumfries & Galloway Council’s Environment Team saw the opportunity for the scheme, and we have taken an innovative, partnership approach to oversight and management. This has definitely allowed the scheme to flourish and be embraced by the local community.

The real benefit of a scheme like this will be the positive legacy left for the people and habitats of the valley. ”

Simon Fieldhouse, Environment Team Manager, Dumfries & Galloway Council



An aerial photograph of a stone bridge with multiple arches spanning a river. The river flows through a lush green landscape with dense trees and rolling hills in the background. A paved path runs alongside the river on the left. The sky is blue with some clouds.

"I'm not usually very good at sport but this I can do. I have been playing with all of my class and I feel great because I have won some games and always been involved!"

Pupil commenting on the purchased Indoor curling kits through the 'Hands on heritage' project.

"A wonderful walk around the roads and woodland. Thank you for the hard work of the Galloway Glens and Environment Team! I'm only 86 years old, enjoyed every minute and hope to return."

Comment on Crossmichael Community Woodland path improvements

"I didn't know if I'd like it because I'm new in this school and I didn't know many people. But it's great!"

Attendee referring to a 'Wellbeing in Winter' Event

"this is the most inclusive activity we have done in a long time, the pupils that normally shy away have stepped up and are loving PE, we have loved it as staff too"

Teacher after a lesson using the indoor curling kits

"Again thank you all so much for such an amazing opportunity for [him], he has blossomed and we are so hopeful that this will help in our quest to get him to enjoy the outdoors more"

Parent, referring to a 'Go Wild' camp attendee

Ambition

The Galloway Glens Scheme sought to use a heritage-led approach to tackle contemporary challenges being faced in the Ken/Dee valley. Through 2016 and 2017, consultation took place to identify six main challenges, with these used to give the Scheme six main themes of activity for the five-year delivery phase:

- 1 Understanding.** Opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of our amazing natural, cultural and built heritage.
- 2 Education.** A series of school-age initiatives covering topics from sustainable development through to responsible outdoor access. Facilitating work experience roles that challenge the preconception that young people have to leave Galloway for work.
- 3 Visiting.** Improving a visitor's experience in Galloway, thereby supporting the vital hospitality and tourism economy.
- 4 Access.** Adding to and improving the network of paths in the valley.
- 5 Heritage Hubs:** Supporting the use and therefore sustainability of local buildings, highlighting their heritage value.
- 6 Natural Landscapes:** Protecting species or habitats that are under threat.

Delivery

The scheme supported approximately 40 headline projects across the six themes. These varied from partner-led initiatives that received funding from the scheme, through to projects driven solely by the Galloway Glens team.

The suite of headline projects was supported by a range of smaller initiatives and a dedicated small grants scheme, through which 27 awards were made, totalling approximately £100,000 in spend.

The Galloway Glens Team consisted of 5 core staff, employed by Dumfries & Galloway Council, and a range of project staff (9 at peak), employed by project partners.

The Scheme was overseen by a Partnership board of 13 key partners, including an elected member from Dumfries & Galloway Council and the Director of the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere.

"It has been a great initiative with an impact out of all proportion to the small amount of resource involved. Well done everyone."

Chair of Scottish Land Commission



1) Understanding

Opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of our amazing natural, cultural and built heritage.

"We have absolutely enjoyed everything we've done with the Galloway Glens & have learnt so much about the local area & met some lovely people along the way!"

'Can You Dig It' event participant.

"What a lot of fun!"

Event attendee



"[Volunteering has given me] a renewed sense of activity and purpose post-retiral; not to mention the joy and pleasure in simple contact and conversation in a time of pandemic."

Volunteer on the 'Can You Dig It' project.



PROJECT	LEAD PARTNER
Historic Mapping – Unearthing, digitising and discussing pre-ordnance survey maps.	Dumfries Archival Mapping Project
The 'Can You Dig It' Community Archaeology Programme – 4 years of engaging and educational archaeology activity.	Galloway Glens Scheme/ Historic Environment Scotland
Place Names of the Galloway Glens – A study of local place names to reveal the changing languages and landscape of the area.	University of Glasgow – School of Celtic & Gaelic Studies
Voices of the Glens – Investigating the complex relationship between Galloway's changing language, dialect and accents.	Galloway Glens Scheme

Projects within this aim held 59 public events with 5316 attendees.

More than 2,000 place names studied and detailed on the public database.

290 volunteers engaged across all four projects.

More than 100 questionnaires completed exploring words disappearing from use.

2) Education

A series of school-age initiatives covering topics from sustainable development through to responsible outdoor access and work experience

PROJECT	LEAD PARTNER
Galloway Rural Skills – A programme of high-quality work experience opportunities and Internships.	Galloway Glens Scheme/Local Employers
Hands on Heritage – Heritage skill demonstrations and information events.	Galloway Glens Scheme
Community Activities – An awesome selection of community events and activities supported that celebrate the heritage of Galloway. From Vikings to Jazz, from Wicker Bulls to Pre School support, and everything in between...	Galloway Glens Scheme/So many partners
Galloway Glens Business Academy – Events and activities that allow local businesses to use local heritage to benefit their bottom lines.	Galloway Glens Scheme/Business Gateway
Galloway Glens Go Wild – Week long summer camps – with a focus on fun but also responsible access and how to safely enjoy the Galloway Outdoors.	Galloway Glens Scheme/ NTS/ Kirkcudbright Development Trust/ Glenkens Community & Arts Trust
Biosphere Explorers – Embedding Sustainable Development education into local schools through school sessions and events.	Crichton Carbon Centre
Drystone Dykes Demonstration – A viewpoint built on Threave Estate demonstrating a range of Galloway Dyking styles.	SW Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association/ NTS
Ken Words – The local writers group explored how landscape can inspire creative writing, through events and publications.	Glenkens Community & Arts Trust



"I learnt I could listen, and be outside all day, and about John Muir, and badgers"

Participant on Go Wild camp (who declared initially that he wouldn't learn anything.)

"I have no doubt that the expertise I have gained will greatly enhance my CV and support my future career in the field."

A Galloway Glens supported Intern

15 Intern or work experience opportunities supported

2501 school pupils have taken part in events and lessons
120 attendees of 'Go Wild' camps.

When asked how much they enjoyed a Galloway Glens event, 90% of 185 attendees asked rated their enjoyment as 4 or 5 (on a scale of 1 – 5).

25 Business Academy public events attended by 250 local businesspeople

3 Visiting

Improving a visitor's experience in Galloway, thereby supporting the vital hospitality and tourism economy.

"The Galloway 'Brand' including the Biosphere image is more recognisable, shops are finally starting to promote the region, local produce and services are applauded and people tend to feel proud of their region."

Public survey response



PROJECT	LEAD PARTNER
Loch Ken: Alive – Supporting the communities and businesses around Loch Ken, enabling a resilient and sustainable future.	Loch Ken Trust
The Galloway Glens Experience – working with small and micro businesses to explore the feasibility of experiential tourism packages.	Southern Uplands Partnership
Glenkens Hub – Establishing an information portal for the Glenkens, and acting as a repository for all Galloway Glens digital assets. Visit www.glenkens.scot .	Glenkens Community & Arts Trust
Kirkcudbright Dark Space Planetarium – Capitalising on the Gold Tier status of the Galloway Dark Sky Park to create a popular visitor attraction in the Old Johnston School.	Kirkcudbright Development Trust

"It's been a great force for marketing the area and highlighting some of the real issues facing the rural communities as well as the fascinating history and supporting community assets"

Public survey response

Of all attendees at Galloway Glens online events, 76% were from outside Dumfries and Galloway, demonstrating the reach of the scheme, promoting the area externally.

In a public survey of 113 responses over 95% said that the 'work of the Galloway Glens Scheme had encouraged visitors to come to the area'.

Flagship projects such as the Dark Space Planetarium are attracting thousands of visitors into the area.

The Galloway Glens supported a number of 'Galloway Relaunch' events, resuming after the Covid-19 induced hiatus.

4 Access

Adding to and improving the network of paths in the valley.

PROJECT	LEAD PARTNER
Out and About – A series of footpaths and visitor facilities creation, focussing on widening access to the Galloway landscape.	Galloway Glens Scheme/ wider Dumfries & Galloway Council's Environment Team
Glenkens Pilgrims Way – aka 'The Pack Road'. Reopening the largely inaccessible historic route from Polmaddy to Carsphairn.	Galloway Glens Scheme
Corserine Access Improvements – a new bridge, section of path and signage on the Corserine Hill walk.	Forrest Estate
Connecting Town & Country – a) Improvements on the Railway path from Castle Douglas to Threave Estate, Lamb Island and Bridge of Dee b) A new circular route round Threave Nature Reserve.	National Trust for Scotland
Exploring New Galloway – Footpaths in the New Galloway Golf Club Woods and work at the Garroch Estate.	Local Initiatives in New Galloway (LING)
Kirkcudbright Bay Views – Drainage & Surfacing Improvements along the Torrs Point footpath.	Solway Firth Partnership

"The path has made this area more accessible to more people which will hopefully lead to more nature being protected."

Comment on Torrs Point path.



"Brilliant - It's a great walk with picturesque views. We have told lots of people about it so they can enjoy it too."

Comment on New Galloway link path

23 miles of footpath created or improved, including 4 bridges.

Access projects have attracted a quarter of a million pounds of match funding.

95% of 80 respondents agreed that the footpath in question 'Made the natural environment more accessible'

67% of 97 respondees agreed strongly that 'the work of the Galloway Glens has made it easier for people to get out into nature'.

5 Heritage Hubs

Supporting the use and therefore sustainability of local buildings, highlighting their heritage value

“Everyone that visits brings their own take on things and often contributes as much information to us as volunteers running it as they get out of the displays!”

Volunteer at Crossmichael Heritage Project.



PROJECT	LEAD PARTNER
Dalry Town Hall – Covenanter Video installation + signage.	Dalry Town Hall Management Committee
Donald Watson Bird Trail – Driving and Walking Trail across the Glenkens.	Glenkens Community & Arts Trust
Tolbooth Tales: The Story of Law & Order – Exhibition on first floor of Tolbooth exploring the building’s history.	Dumfries & Galloway Council
Crossmichael Community Heritage & Living History – Displaying heritage of the parish in the Hearse Hoose and the Church Hall.	Crossmichael Community Council
Balmaclellan Smiddy – Refurbishing the Smiddy to create a multi-use community building.	Glenkens Community & Arts Trust
New Galloway Town Hall – Contributing towards refurbishment costs and green energy upgrades.	Local Initiatives in New Galloway

“Regular users include singers, yoga, a creative writing group and even a weekly tin whistle class! The two meeting rooms have had regular use by disparate organisations bringing in attendees from all over the region.”

Feedback on use of Balmaclellan Smiddy

10 new or refurbished community buildings supported through the whole scheme.

More than 90% of volunteers said they had learned more about heritage.

A drive to ‘spend local’ resulted in major refurbishment contracts for Dumfries & Galloway Businesses.

65% of volunteers said that they had ‘Made friendships/social connections in [their] community’.

6) Natural Landscapes

Protecting species or habitats that are under threat.

PROJECT	LEAD PARTNER
Conservation of Red Squirrels – Protecting Red Squirrels in Galloway.	Glenkens Red Squirrel Group
Greenland White Fronted Geese – Tagging Greenland White Fronted Geese, and implementing management plans.	RSPB
Black Grouse Habitat Creation – Working through Galloway Forest Park to implement habitat management plans.	RSPB
Kenmure Holms improvements – Signage and access improvements on Kenmure Holms, a home for the Willow Tit.	RSPB
Threave Landscape Restoration Project – Kickstarting a 100-year project to revert a dairy farm into a climate-change resilient, wetland/woodland habitat.	National Trust for Scotland
Black Water of Dee Restoration – supporting fish populations by adding gravel, removing conifers and planting of riverbank trees.	Galloway Fisheries Trust
Barhill Woods, Kirkcudbright – Creation of red squirrel hide, education shelter and paths.	Kirkcudbright Development Trust
Peatland Connections – Connecting people to peatlands through a multi-disciplinary and creative approach.	Crichton Carbon Centre
Fish: Loch Ken – Surveys and targeted removal of Invasive Non-Native Species. Tagging and tracking of young Salmon in the river.	Galloway Fisheries Trust
South Of Scotland Tree Planting Grant Scheme – offering £1,000 grants for small scale native tree planting	Galloway Glens Scheme

“It’s not very often that you see such ambition and vision for land use change. This is a bold and encouraging project that will no doubt create interest and curiosity from many”

Comment about the Threave Landscape Restoration Project

“This project shows the cutting-edge approaches being adopted by people right here in Galloway”

Feedback on the Black Water of Dee Restoration project.

206 hectares of land brought into conservation management through projects in this theme.

‘Nature Positive’ projects supported including Black Water of Dee, Threave Landscape Restoration Project and Peatland Connections.

A strong focus on visibility and communications used the work as exemplars to distribute through learning networks.

3134 hours of volunteer time has been spent on projects in this strand.



“The Galloway Glens has made it possible to make one of our seasonal members of staff full time. [For which we are] very grateful”

Manager, local business

“For the Galloway Glens contract we sourced all the materials and the plant hire locally. So the purchasing has spread from this business through the local community, benefiting many businesses and the local economy.”

- Footpath contractor

“For our cycling business, the infrastructure at Otterpool is extremely important for stops and chats and “showing off”. The work done around cycle and walking provision is a key to how we guide our visitors. Also, the support for big events (The Gralloch and Raiders) is key to the success of the events which in turn can bring around half a million pounds for the local economy.”

Local cycling business



Boosting the Local Economy

The Scheme is an initiative of **Dumfries & Galloway Council's Environment Team**, itself part of the Council's Economy & Resources Department, and a large part of the establishment of the scheme was an effort to better harness the amazing Galloway Outdoors and Heritage to drive economic activity.

The Galloway Glens Scheme has sought to support economic activity on two levels, primarily through the impact of the projects undertaken, but also through the delivery of the scheme itself.

The Scheme is adjudged to have delivered benefits on both levels, although the latter point is obviously easier to quantify.

- **More than 75% of the scheme's £6million** in expenditure has stayed in the region, being spent with Dumfries & Galloway Businesses
- **More than 190 Dumfries & Galloway Businesses** have received work through the scheme.
- **Many of these businesses, now set up on Dumfries & Galloway Council systems**, have gone on to bid for work with other departments of the Council – the Galloway Glens Scheme was essentially acting as a gateway to local government procurement.

Supporting Sustainable Communities

The Galloway Glens Scheme sought to embed all of the work undertaken with local communities. Being a time-limited initiative, the approach has been to see our certain departure as a benefit, maximising scheme legacy planning and activity.

A heritage-led scheme like this does have a vital part to play in supporting sustainable communities, and many of the projects undertaken have delivered wider sustainable community benefits, including:

- **Supported the establishment of the Loch Ken Trust**, with the Loch Ken Plan seeking to work towards all 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals - making the first 'future-ready' community.
- **Overseeing the Climate Ready Ken project**, working with Adaptation Scotland to design a climate adaptation toolkit for the Loch Ken community.
- **Supporting community groups** in their ambitions to take ownership of land in the area.
- **Direct investment in community buildings and assets**, upgrading facilities and reducing ongoing running costs, and also a major provider of bookings and building use during delivery phase.
- **The 'Galloway Footsteps' events committed to 1,900 fewer pieces** of single-use plastic and a saving of 42 tonnes of carbon.
- **A major role in Covid-19 response**, adjusting plans to support the restart of activities after the pandemic but also active in retaining community cohesion and providing activity during the lockdowns.

"The backing of the Galloway Glens has provided the energy, confidence and support the [Stewartry] Show needed to springboard back into action after so long [Covid-19 absence]."

Member of the Stewartry Agricultural Society

"I would like to thank the team for leading us in a time of great change and stress to many. Their good humour and expertise acted as a great link to our wider area at a time when rural isolation could have been a disaster. Well done!"

Public survey response

"Main benefit has been in forging new connections within the community and in sharing ideas and practices and developing mutually supportive friendships."

Volunteer on the Exploring New Galloway project

"[the project] has delivered skills to communities and empowered them to explore their locale"

Feedback on a 'Can You Dig It' initiative



Scheme Legacy

On a project level, the scheme's legacy continues through work and partnerships established during the five-year delivery phase. The Galloway Glens Scheme sought to catalyse and facilitate work above and beyond that supported directly, and it is great to see examples of that taking place.

On a Scheme level, the legacy ambition was that partners would see the merit of the approach taken, and feel able to undertake a similar scheme again in the future.

This document forms only part of the Galloway Glens Evaluation documentation. Please contact the Dumfries & Galloway Council Environment Team for:

- 1) The Galloway Glens Scheme – Measuring Success Toolkit
- 2) The Galloway Glens Scheme – Assessment of approach



Galloway Glens Team at 2023 Stewartry Show

“Hugely rewarding, wonderful experience, humbling, fascinating, vital - very grateful to have been part of it. Thank you!”

Deliverer of a 'Go Wild' camp

“Is the project really going to end? I think its been brilliant...”

Online event attendee

“[I gained] mapping, researching skills, accessing websites and data sources, deepened knowledge, understanding, appreciation of environment and curiosity”

'Can You Dig It' volunteer

The Galloway Glens Team

Team Leader - McNabb Laurie

Project Officer - Nick Chisholm

Land Management & Access Officer - Jonathan Barrett

Education & Community Engagement Officer - Helen Keron (2018 – 21), Jan Hogarth (2021-23)

Administrator - Jude Crooks (2018-21), Anna Harvey (2021-23), Debbie Marshall (2022-23)



"I have acquired a newly informed depth of understanding and engagement with my local environment. I can better read the history of the landscape where I live."

- Event attendee

"That was an excellent presentation. The split screening, occasional shots of the live audience, Q&A with both presenters etc. Extremely interesting content, and a very good speaker. You really seem to have got on top of hybrid presentations. Technically one of the best I have viewed and I've seen a lot over the past 2 years, including from much bigger national institutions."

Feedback from an online attendee

"In an area where there is considerable volunteer fatigue it has mitigated the impact and helped galvanise people into doing things."

- Local funder

"What an amazing 5 years for this area. Something really strong to keep building on for future generations living here."

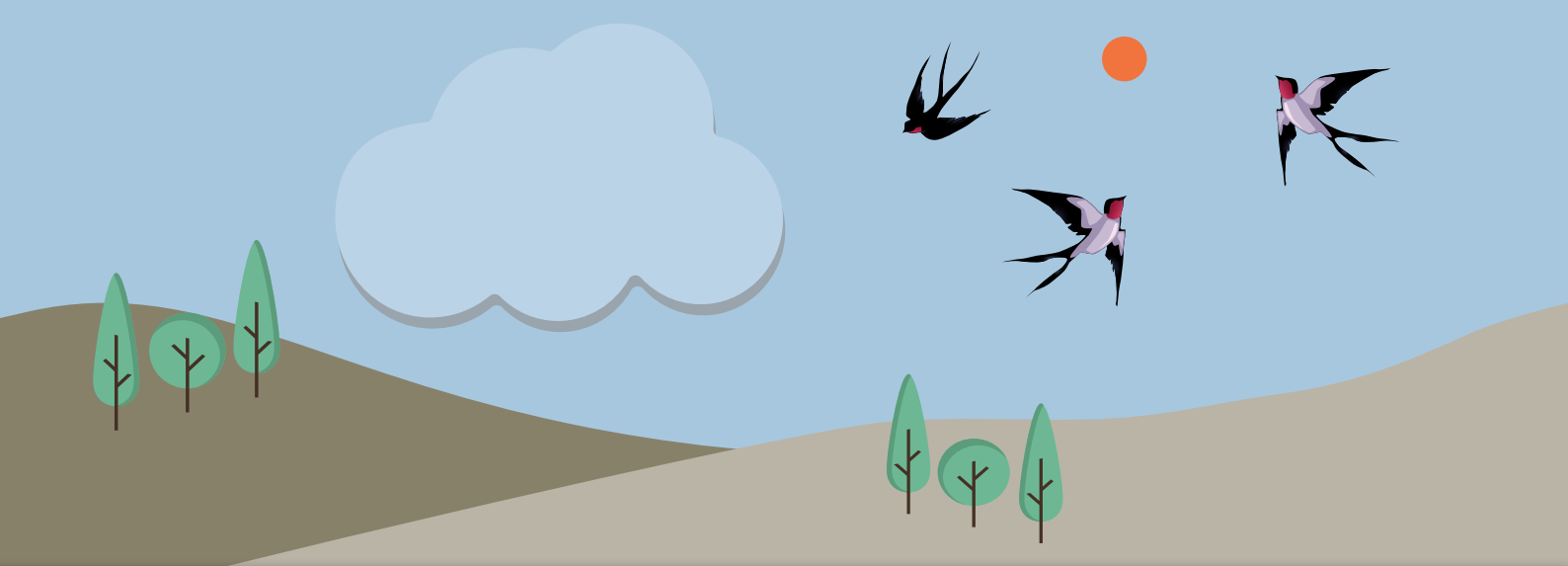
Public Survey response

Yes the money has been helpful for projects. But most of all it has been the enterprise, vitality and action by the Galloway Glens team, that has been of greatest benefit. It has helped so many of us to come together to bring nascent ideas to fruition, to learn more about our area and to give a greater sense of a positive future"

Feedback from Project Partner

"The number of positive initiatives that have come out of the Galloway Glens Scheme is truly amazing, and this landscape partnership stands head and shoulders above any other of this type of organisation that I've come across"

Public survey response



Thank you to all involved

