

Paths Development Strategy 2022-26 Consultative Draft



Gargunnock Community Trust
Paths Group

Paths Development Strategy 2022 -26

Background

Path development falls within the objects of the Gargunock Community Trust Memorandum and Articles of Association, which permit the provision of “facilities for recreation and other leisure time activity available to the public at large within the village of Gargunock and the surrounding area...” The first Gargunock Community Plan published in September 2000 under the aegis of the Community Futures Project had as an action priority, “the development of new footpath, bridleway and cycle routes”. Following the establishment of the Trust in 2004 there have been several further village consultation exercises in which footpath and cycleway development has been identified as a continuing priority.

The Gargunock community has worked with local landowners on the maintenance of the local path network and on the development of new links on the Ladies Walk and around Watson House. They also co-operated with Stirling Council on the designation of the Core Path Network around the village. Following increased interest in engaging village volunteers in path maintenance and development work the Trust set up the Paths Group in 2018 in order to plan and co-ordinate work in this area.

Work to date has included: [1] repainting the pedestrian bridge at the foot of Main Street [2] the creation of an all-weather path through the Glebe Park [3] initial work on resurfacing Charlie’s Loan [4] attracting funds from Sustrans to carry out a feasibility study and more detailed design work on a Gargunock to Stirling Cycleway and [5] carrying out a survey on the usage of The Beeches Path, commissioning a Paths for All improvement specification and submission of a grant application for the Scottish Government’s Improving Public Access [IPA] finance.

Strategy Aims and Objectives

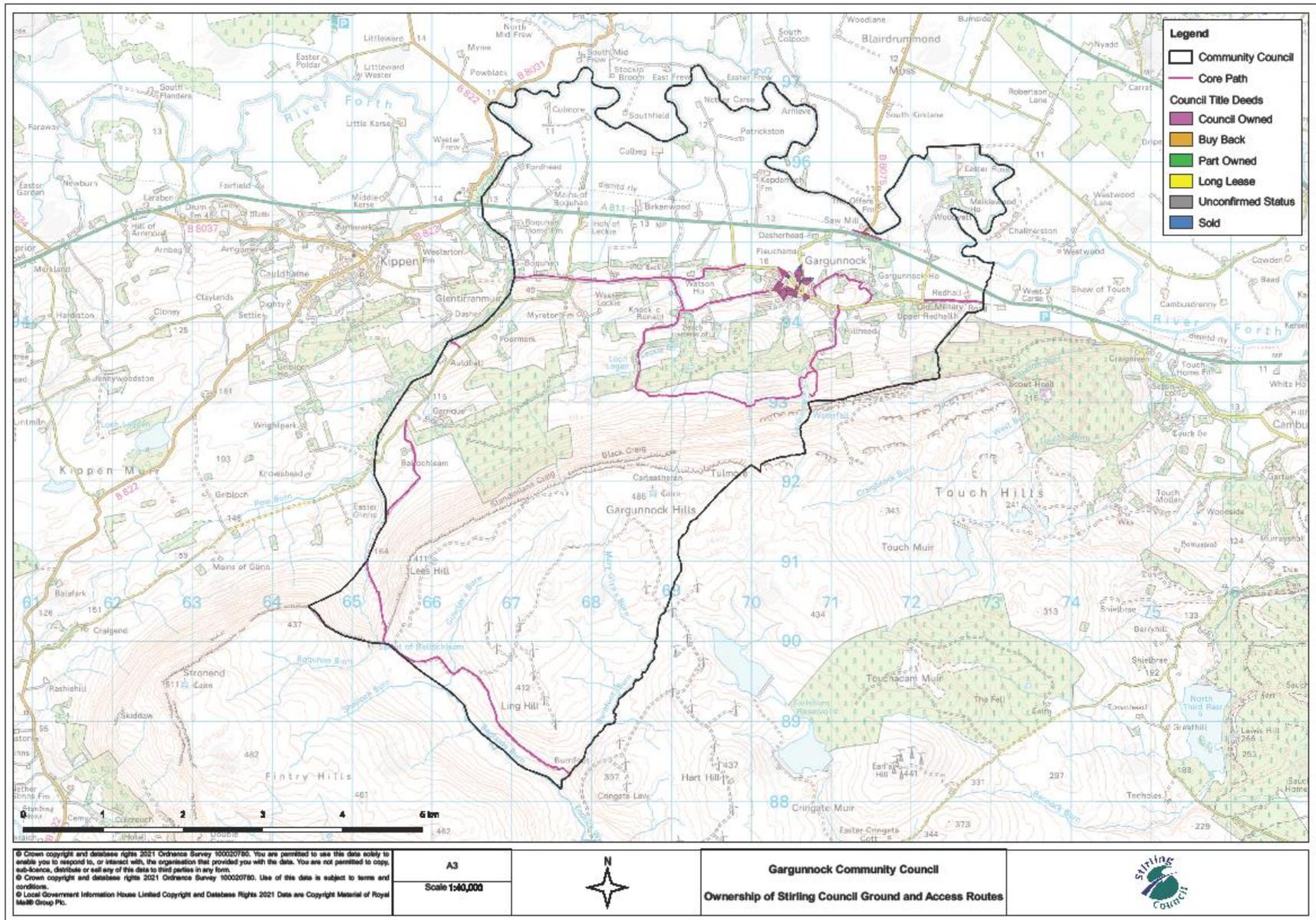
To promote, create and maintain an interlinked network of safe, attractive, fit for purpose, off-road graded paths in and around Gargunnoch, linking with other local communities on the Carse of Stirling; with sites and features of interest; and providing opportunities for informal recreation, active travel and tourism development

1. To increase opportunities through an interlinked network of local and strategic routes for people of all ages and abilities from the village to explore and enjoy the Gargunnoch countryside on foot, cycle and (where appropriate) on horseback.
2. To increase opportunities for residents to undertake journeys to work, services and facilities on foot and by bike
3. To make the area a more attractive place to live, work and visit, provide a catalyst for tourism development and support local services
4. To identify, develop and promote local routes which facilitate circular journeys

Key principles essential to achieving these aims and objectives include:

- Using volunteer labour from the community wherever possible subject to best practice Health and Safety considerations
- Seeking to attract grants from funding bodies where appropriate
- Early engagement and constructive working with landowners re path maintenance, proposed improvements and new route potential
- Focusing time and resources on key local paths that link local communities, meet local priorities and improve path users confidence in making the right path choices for them
- Consulting at an early stage with existing path users, nearby residents and businesses where changes or new routes are proposed so that any potential negative impacts can be identified and minimised or mitigated
- Helping users be confident in choosing the right path for them by adopting *The Paths for All Path Managers Guide to Grading*
- Developing, creating and managing paths in accordance with best practice wherever possible, minimising ongoing maintenance requirements. *The Lowland Path Construction Guide* is a key reference in this respect.

<https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/mediaLibrary/other/english/68593.pdf>



Action Plan

Short-term priorities [2022-3]

- Sign and clearly waymark existing paths using the Paths for All *Path Managers Guide to Grading*
- Monitor the condition of the core path network and seek to secure/undertake essential maintenance where required and identify opportunities for improvement. In particular;
 - Complete Charlie's Loan Improvement
 - Complete minor repairs to Ladies Walk and Watson House Path
 - Improve Ladies Walk section from Manse Brae to the Glebe Park
- Secure agreement to replace gates and cut overgrown vegetation....

Medium-term priorities [2023-26]

- Commission and/or undertake reconstruction of The Beeches Path to make it fit for purpose
- Secure landowner agreement on Gargunnoch – Stirling Cycleway and proceed to detailed design and construction
- Work with other Carse communities on promoting the development of the Kings Highway
- Replace gates and cut overgrown vegetation to restore multi-use along old military road east of Gargunnoch
- Monitor condition and seek to secure/undertake maintenance and improvement of the old military road between Kippen and Gargunnoch and promote multi-use access
- Develop new path link between Hillhead path and Garshellach
- Improve signage/waymarking as per *Path Managers Guide to Grading* and install two way gates on Gargunnoch Hills paths
- Produce a local Paths Map

Longer Term Priorities [2026 onwards]

- Re-establish link from Gargunnoch to Chalmerston Road linking to Stirling via Craigforth
- Create an off-road link on the north side of Leckie Road from Charlie's Loan to the Leckie Estate Road
- Recreate the link from the top of Main Street to Leckie Road?
- Consult with the local community to identify opportunities for new paths and work with stakeholders to develop proposals

Resource Implications

The implementation of the Action Plan will require an appropriate level of resources. In the short-term the Charlie's Loan improvement will be completed with materials supplied by Stirling Council and labour supplied by Paths Group volunteers. For some of the other short-term priorities, material costs have been met by a grant from the Windfarm Fund while volunteer labour will again be used for the construction work. It is likely that parts of the core network around the village will in future years need [hopefully minor] remedial action and some support with material costs from the Windfarm Fund will be necessary again to facilitate the use of volunteer labour.

The two big issues for the strategy are, firstly the improvement of The Beeches Walk, which could cost in excess of £25,000 [the actual figure will not be known until contractor prices have been received]. Although unsuccessful in 2021 on a technicality we have resubmitted in 2022 but only the link sections are eligible in this funding round. If successful, the IPA grant will only be paid retrospectively in 2023 so it is possible that a loan from the Windfarm Fund will be necessary to cover any stage payments. In addition, the maximum grant using the IPA formula for the reconstruction work is significantly less than the likely cost so [a] grant[s] to cover the difference between the IPA grant and the cost of the remedial work would also be required.

The second major issue is the construction of the Gargunock to Stirling cycleway on the basis that landowner approval is finally obtained. A large part of the construction costs [70%] will be met by Sustrans and it is expected that all or most of the balance will be met by Stirling Council. However, there may be some costs [primarily relating to landowner agreement] which would fall to be met by the Gargunock Community Trust and assistance from the Windfarm Fund would be sought in those circumstances.

Please forward any comments to:

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