

Annual General Meeting Monday 30th April 2012
Scotia Room Camelon Education Centre 7 -9 pm



Chairman's Report

Since our 2011 AGM our profile has certainly been raised with all the local and national Authorities that have kindly supported us with grant aid, to enable important bio-diversity works to be completed.

Over this last 12 months we have managed to raise in excess of £84,000 from a vast ray of funders, namely Leader/SNH/Falkirk Council/CSFT/CSGN/ RCFMG and LASAC that now takes our total funding raised over the past two years to £242K.

CATCA are an "Enabling" organisation formed not to interfere with the excellent work already being undertaken within the 16 Communities that make up the River Carron catchment area, but we are there to assist those Community Councils and Community Groups with larger capital works that might not otherwise be able to be undertaken.

River Carron Clean Up.

The most 'high profile' work that was undertaken during 2011 was the River Carron Clean Up works that took place between Frankerton and Larbert Viaduct at a cost of £57k. We thank a number of funders for making this work possible, namely:-

FET
Falkirk Council Planning & Environmental Services
River Carron Fisheries Management Group
Callander Estates Trust

Additionally, technical support was received from SNH & SEPA & Forth Fisheries Trust.

This work took place between late May and early August and included invaluable work from our appointed contractor David Walker Landscape Services together with amazing voluntary work carried out by several members of the River Carron Fisheries Management Group.

The 2nd Phrase Clean Up works between Larbert Viaduct and Bainsford which we were hoping to complete in 2012 will need to be delayed until 2013.

CATCA have been successful in raising £29k from FET together with another £7250.00 being raised from a number of other funders, however ,FET due to new contractual guidelines are now only allowed to commit funding if it is 50% match funded.

The match funding has proved extremely difficult to raise because of the current economic situation and public sector cutbacks. However, a positive has come from the negative and FET have indicated that they are prepared to "ring fence"

the £29k grant aid until 2013 and will investigate how much voluntary time, can be allowed as match funding, to let us proceed.

In the meantime, it is hoped that the voluntary sector will enable some litter picking along the river banks, to be undertaken in 2012 and FET have agreed to meet the Third Party Insurance Policy costs.

We also hope to use 2012 to obtain the landowners consent to enable the works to be done in 2013.

Invasive Species

In conjunction with the river clean up works, there is the very difficult task of trying to deal with the Invasive Species problems that trouble much of the River Carron.

CATCA prides itself with the fact that in November 2010, we brought all the statutory authorities together to kick start the process, which has now come to pass, in the setting up of both the Invasive Species Local Steering Committee within Falkirk Council under the expert guidance of Ian Edwards and Anna Perks and the new Pan Forth Invasive Species Steering Committee that has now met on several occasions to oversee clearance works along the River Forth.

Falkirk Council are providing invaluable funding together with SNH & Leader, which will see the Forth Fisheries Trust working in conjunction with CATCA and the River Avon Fisheries Management Group to tackle this ever increasing problem in the Autumn this year along parts of both rivers.

This work needs continuity over a long period of time and again I am pleased to advise that the two major funders SNH & Leader have supported this theory and have agreed to financially support this work in coming years.

CATCA were invited last summer to host the Invasive Species Awareness Day held at Grangemouth Town Hall in October. The day was opened by the Falkirk Council Chief Executive Mary Pitcaithy and supported by the Lord Provost together with many Elected Members and Officers of the Council

About 200 people visited Grangemouth Town Hall that day to make it a real success.

The important message to take from this successful story is that "together" it is amazing what can be achieved.

Education

At last year's AGM we explained that we were working closely with the then Director of Education Ms' Julia Swan to carry out the required "missionary" work with the Primary and Secondary Schools along the Carron to establish what the schools themselves want to see taking place to assist the delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence.

I am pleased to advise that SNH & Leader provided the funding to allow CATCA to employ a part-time Project Officer to deliver the Educational Packages.

Christine Bell was appointed following a full and fair interview process and started work on the 1st November. She is based in this building working closely with the schools who want to be engaged along the river.

We have received huge assistance from numerous teachers and the new Director of Education, Mr Andrew Sutherland who are all very supportive of our efforts and who share our vision to regenerate the River Carron and surrounding environment. They agree that education plays a key part in this regeneration.

Christine's report explains what we are currently undertaking with the schools and copies are available in the room and in sections on the notice boards.

Feasibility Study

During the past year we have been able to see the completion of the Community Path Network Feasibility Study. This report includes provision for several new bridge crossings.

The study was completed in February this year and has been warmly received by all the relevant grant authorities to provide a platform to take to the major funders to hopefully attract capital funding.

The study split the river into three separate priorities, namely:-

(1) To upgrade the existing path from Glensburgh (Grangemouth) to Carronshore, which will involve upgrading works at a cost of approx.' £250k.

(2) To use the existing Falkirk Council owned disused railway track that runs from the Falkirk Wheel area to Denny High School.

This extends to about 6 miles and will involve three bridge crossings-one being the motorway.

The estimated costs are around £1m at 2012 valuation.

(3) Upgrading the existing path network from Denny to Carron Glen.
The upgrading works will cost about £300k.

It is hoped that we might be able to attract Falkirk College to become involved in this project under one of the many new Youth Training Schemes.

Bridges

Brand new & replacement bridges will be required to be built.

A start has already been made with the replacement of the Dale Bridge at Denny where CATCA were very instrumental in getting all the parties together to achieve the £200k funding that was needed to replace a 250 year old bridge which is an important crossing point over the River Carron for the local people.

Falkirk Council was responsible for the Procurement - Design and Build of the bridge.

An official opening of the Bridge will take place on Saturday the 1st September 2012.

The existing swing bridge at Larbert will be replaced later this year-although in fairness CATCA cannot really take any credit for this bridge - -that credit must rest with Falkirk Council together with Central Scotland Forest Trust and the LASER Group at Larbert.

The report also identified that a brand new bridge should be built at Carronshore to link two important communities together and enable the existing path network to be better utilised.

Another bridge crossing near to the Dalderse Sewage Works has been recommended in the report, but this has been deemed not economic to deliver.

Another crossing point at Grangemouth is being considered which would complement the new Canal network, but much discussion still needs to be undertaken.

It is important to thank the Path/Bridge Steering Committee which includes representatives from Falkirk Council-SUSTRANS-Central Scotland Forest Trust and Paths for All and funding was received from these organisations together with Leader.

The Steering Committee continues to meet and will assist CATCA to hopefully raise the necessary capital funding to build & improve the path network along the Carron.

Management Committee

Without individually mentioning each member of the committee, I would like to thank each and every one of the committee for all their very hard work over the past 12 months and I look forward again to working with the committee in the coming year. Sadly Bridget Riddell our committee fundraiser had to leave us due to being over extended in her voluntary commitments and we would like to express a special thanks to her for her hugely successful fund raising efforts with us.

To Frank McCord/ Kate Kane/Richard Broadley/ Angus Duncan/Mandy Brown/Fiona Wishart /Ian Edwards / Anna Perks/Art Berg/ Greg Pender /Ralph Ridley and Alan Rodger, all from Falkirk Council, I thank each of you, for your advice and guidance through the past year.

Ian R. Howarth
Chairman