



## Case Study 3

# Reclaiming the medieval Langriggs for the community



1853 oil painting of the Cumbernauld Langriggs

**Cumbernauld's Langriggs date back to medieval times, but action was needed to reclaim these historic sites for the community and secure their future.**

### The challenge

The Langriggs of Cumbernauld Village date back to medieval times. Once typical of early Scottish villages each property on Main Street had their own long narrow plots of land or riggs. These Langriggs stretching out behind the homes were used by the villagers to carry out their particular trade. Some grew food or kept livestock whilst others contained small outbuildings for the home weaving industry.

The Langriggs are principally owned by North Lanarkshire Council but individual ownerships can be traced back prior to 1669. Once common in villages across Scotland the layout of the Langriggs has rarely survived development across the centuries. South of Main Street the seventeen Langriggs remain as public greenspace. These provide a site of cultural heritage in this urban area and also form a green corridor for wildlife, linking the Scottish Wildlife Trust reserves of Cumbernauld Glen and Seafar Woods.

In the 1970s and again in the mid 1990s housing development proposals threatened to destroy the Cumbernauld's Langriggs.

The walls and hedges that once contained livestock and demarcated the properties had fallen into disrepair. Overgrown hedges and dense scrub had made the area uninviting and attracted antisocial behaviour. This meant that the area became vulnerable to development because it was not seen as an asset to the town.

Action was needed to secure the Langriggs for future generations and the community wanted to reclaim the space. Opportunities for sympathetic use of this historic greenspace needed to be examined.

- The Cumbernauld Langriggs date back to medieval times
- The long narrow plots of land were used to grow food and supporting communities
- Very few langriggs survive across Scotland and action was needed to reclaim them for the community

## The solution

North Lanarkshire Council's (NLC) greenspace staff organised a community consultation inviting people to give their views on the future of the riggs. Over 90% wanted the historical integrity to be assured and the area restored and preserved as quality accessible greenspace. However, given the problems with antisocial behaviour this regeneration could not be achieved by Council funding alone. The volunteer group Cumbernauld Village Action for the Community (CVAC) have been crucial.



**Cumbernauld Village  
Action for the  
Community**



Carbrain Community Council play scheme learn about the history of the site with the volunteers from CVAC

## The benefits

The partnership between NLC and Cumbernauld Village Action for the Community has meant that the Langriggs have been saved for future generations. Physical improvements to the area have led to it being a safer, more attractive place which in turn has attracted more people to use the Langriggs.

### Historic value

A walk through the Langriggs today shows where the villagers carried out their trades and sustained themselves. Improvement works, part funded through the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (supported by Historic Scotland), has restored old walls, reduced overgrown hedges and removed trees to reveal these historical features. The local community group CVAC has tapped into the wealth of local knowledge to reveal the story of the Langriggs to visitors.

### Wildlife haven

Bluebells, snowdrops and common spotted orchids find a home amongst the ancient walls. The biodiversity of the site has been improved by volunteers from CVAC. Their hard work has created new habitats for pollinators and homes for

amphibians. With NLC Greenspace staff they have created and maintained colourful flower beds, wildflower areas, bog gardens and historic artefacts.

### Community resource

Resurfacing the paths and improving access has been instrumental in reclaiming the Langriggs. Some of the greatest benefits have come from the community. CVAC has rejuvenated community allotments and has regular events. This has been so successful that the Langriggs have now been designated a Fields in Trust site to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and ensure the site is protected in perpetuity.

"The partnership work between North Lanarkshire Council and CVAC on the Langriggs was a launch pad that allowed CVAC to reclaim the site for the community and for wildlife"

Philip Morgan-Klein, CVAC

Opportunities for sympathetic use of this historic greenspace

Created a collective sense of civic pride for this historic feature and secured the site for future generations

Improved quality of green space for wildlife maintained habitat network links

Enabled communities to grow more food locally



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Cumbernauld Living Landscape aims to enhance, restore and reconnect green areas of the town. Without them, neither wildlife nor people can flourish.

#### To find out more contact

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The Cumbernauld Living Landscape is supported by many community organisations and partners, led by:

